

# HADĪTH LITERATURE

*Its Origin, Development, Special Features and Criticism.*

# HADĪTH LITERATURE

ITS ORIGIN, DEVELOPMENT, SPECIAL FEATURES AND CRITICISM

*By*

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TO  
THE MEMORY OF MY MOTHER

امديك غير مكاف منك واحده  
من الايام التي لم يعفها القدم

( الحلوى )

To thee I dedicate (this) although it does not requite  
even one of thy favours (the memory of) which has not  
been obliterated by Time.



## PREFACE

This little book has been composed in order to present to the English-reading public, Muslim as well as non-Muslim, the viewpoint of orthodox Islam with regard to Ḥadīth Literature, its origin and development, and its criticism by the Muslim doctors. For in English, there has been published only one book on the subject (*The Traditions of Islam* by Alfred Guillaume, Oxford, 1924). But it does not represent the Muslim point of view. In other European languages (like German, French and Dutch) there have been published several highly learned and critical works on *Ḥadīth*. But none of them represents the orthodox Islamic views.

This book was begun in 1930 and was almost completed in 1936. In composing it, have been utilized not only many of the important works of the modern European Orientalists, but also a large part of the original Arabic sources some of which (so far as I know) have not been fully utilized upto now. The reader, therefore, may find in this work some important materials which may not be available in any of the European works on the subject.

Some parts of this book were published in *The Proceedings of the All India Oriental Conference* (1937), pp. 187-206, in the *Proceedings of the Idāra-i-Ma'ārif-i-Islāmiya*, Lahore (1933), pp. 61-71; and an Arabic translation of Chapter VI ("The Special Features of Ḥadīth Literature") was published as a part of *al-Mabāḥith al-ʿIlmiyah*, by the Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif of Hyderabad (India) in 1939. But the book could not be published upto now on account of circumstances which need not be mentioned. It was in 1959 that the University Grants Commission of India and the Calcutta University provided the necessary funds for its publication. I will be failing in my duty if I do not express my gratitude to them for this favour, and also to Dr. G.C. Raychaudhury, the present Registrar of Calcutta University, for his sympathy and keen interest in

the publication of the book. I must also express my heartfelt thanks to Dr. S.A. Kamali, a young competent scholar of Arabic, well-trained in the modern method of literary research, who, very kindly, checked the references in the book, gave me ungrudging help in reading its proofs, and prepared the list of abbreviations and the Index. My thanks are also due to Dr. M.W. Mirza of Lucknow, who translated (from Turkish into English) for me, a passage from an article of Prof. Ahmed Ates (see p. 138); to Mawlana Mukhtār Aḥmad Nadwi (a keen and critical student of Ḥadīth), who found out for me some references to some Ḥadīth-works and Ḥājī Muḥammad Yusuf, the Librarian and the owner (respectively) of the Ḥājī 'Abd Allah Library, Calcutta, for lending me several books on Ḥadīth from their Library.

At the end, I must add that if the perusal of this book creates an active interest in ḥadīth-Literature and Islamic Culture among the young Indian scholars of Arabic and of Islam, I will consider my long, hard work for several years, amply rewarded.

November 1, 1961

M.Z.S.



## ERRATA

*Please correct the following before reading.*

P.	L.	FOR	PLEASE READ
3	19	topics	topic
7	6	hid	his
12	1	words	works
29	26	<i>ai-nār</i>	<i>al-nār</i>
	37	JT,	JT2,
58	18	Kirām	Karrām
71	15	<i>Tabi' 'un</i>	<i>Tābi' ūn</i>
78	31	quickly	quietly
88	27	compilation his	compilation of his
95	15	whcih	which
96	12	work	word
97	9	trxt	text
	25	featuses	features
	33	<i>al-'Ibm</i>	<i>al-'Ilm</i>
		al-Kha'ṭi'b	al-Khaṭīb
99	7	adhrence	adherence
107	4	n Mesopotamia,	in Mesopotamia,
	31	noteds	notes
110	33	b. ḥansal	b. ḥanbal
169	35	<i>Ibid.</i>	FN, 99f.
174	17	<i>Riṭāl</i>	<i>Rijāl</i>
189	1	Chapter IX	Chapter VIII

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## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Colophon of a MS. of the *Musnad* of Imām Shāfi'ī (at the Murad Mulla Library, Istambul, No. 570). Copied in the year 381 A.H. Corresponding to pp. 218f. in the printed edition (printed at Arrah in India, 1889). This is one of the earliest MSS. of Hadīth collections, the earliest one known to me being the MS. of what is said to be *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (see p. 138).

.....Facing p. 73

2. A page from the MS. of *al-Majmu'ah fī al-Ḥadīth* (described in OPC, v, part 2, pp. 191ff., No. 462) :—

- (i) Certificate of reading the MS. Teacher : Shaykh Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Wānī. Students (whose names are mentioned) : about 20 in number. Place : the house of al-Wānī in Damascus. Date 21.8.732 A.H.
- (ii) Certificate of reading the MS. Teacher : 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Mamdūd & 'Umar b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Aḥad. Place : Samsāṭiyah Monastery in Damascus. Date 15.11.732 A.H.
- (iii) Certificate of reading the MS. Teacher: Ṣafīyah (the daughter of Aḥmad, and the wife of Bahā' al-Dīn 'Alī b. 'Umar). Students (men and women) about 10 in number. Place : Damascus. Date 5.11.739 A.H.
- (iv) Certificate of reading the MS. Teachers: Ṣafīyah and her husband (mentioned above). Students (men and women) : about 30 in number. Place : Damascus. Date 23.3.734 A.H.

.....Facing p. 142



3. Pages from a MS. *al-Mashīkhat ma' al-Takhrij* by 'Alī b. Aḥmad Ibn al-Bukhārī (described in OPC, v, part 2. pp. 51ff., No. 322) :—

- (i) Certificate of reading the MS. (11 sittings). Teacher : the author (Ibn al-Bukhārī). Students (men and women) : more than 500. Place : Jāmi' 'Umar, Damascus. Date 687 A.H.
- (ii) Certificate of reading the MS. (6 sittings). Teacher : 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Ṣayrafī. Students (men and women) : more than 200. Place : Aleppo. Date 13.5.736 A.H.

.....Facing p. 153

## ABBREVIATIONS

- AnIs      *Annali dell' Islam*. Leone Caetani. Vols. i-viii, Milan, 1905-1918 : vols. ix-x, Rome, 1926.
- ArH      *Lectures on Arabic Historians*. D. S. Margoliouth. Calcutta, 1930.
- AHM      *Aḥmad ibn Hanbal and the Miḥna*. W. M. Patton. Leiden, 1897.
- AT      *al-Akḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. Abū Ḥanifah Dīnawerī. Leiden, 1888.
- ATb      *Annales (Tā'riḫ al-Rusul w'al-Mulūk)*. Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī. Ed. by Th. Noldeke *et al.* Leiden, 1879.
- Blm      *Bulūgh al-marām min adillat al-aḥkām*. Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī. Delhi, 1325 A.H.
- BM      *Bustān al-Muḥaddithīn*. Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Dihlawī. Delhi, 1898.
- CFT      *Catalogue du fonds Tibétain de la Bibliothèque Nationale*. P. Cordier. Paris, 1915 (vol. iii).
- DK      *al-Durar al-Kāminah*. Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī. Hyderabad (India), 1348-50 A.H. 4 vols.
- DL      *al-Daw' al-Lāmi'*. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī. Cairo, 1353-55 A.H. 12 vols.
- EIs      *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Ed. by M. Th. Houtsma *et al.* Leiden, 1927.
- EIsn      *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. New Edition. Ed. by J.H. Kramers, H.A.R. Gibb *et al.* Leiden, 1954- . Vol. i, fasc. 1-16.
- EIss      *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Ed. by H. A. R. Gibb, J. H. Kramers. Leiden, 1953.



- FB *Fath al-Bārī* (commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*). Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī. Ed. by Maḥmūd Ṭaḥṭāwī. Egypt, 1319 A.H.
- FBn *Futūḥ al-Buldān*. Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad al-Balādhurī. Ed. by M. J. de Goeje. Leiden, 1866.
- FfM *al-Fiṣal fī al-Milal*. Abū Muḥammad 'Alī b. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥazm. Ed. by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Khalīfah. Cairo, 1347-48 A.H. 5 vols.
- FM *Fath al-Mughīth* (commentary on Zayn al-Dīn 'Irāqī's *Alfīyah*) Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al Sakhāwī. Lucknow, n.d.
- FMj *al-Fawā'id al-Majmū'ah fī Bayān al-Aḥādith al-Mawḍū'ah*. Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Shaukānī. Lahore, 1223 (1323?) A.H.
- FN *al-Fihrist*. Ibn al-Nadīm. Ed. by Gustav Flügel. Leipzig, 1871-72. 2 vols.
- GAL *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*. C. Brockelmann. Leiden, 1937.
- GT *Genealogische Tabellen der Arabischen Stämme und Familien*. Accompanied by the *Register zu den GT*. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld. Göttingen, 1852-53.
- HB *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah*. Shāh Walīy Allāh Dihlawī. Cairo, 1352 A. H.
- HH *Hayāt al-Hayawān*. Kamāl al-Dīn al-Damīrī. Būlāq, 1274 A. H. 2 vols.
- HII *History of Indian Literature*. M. Winternitz. Calcutta University Press, 1927.
- HMH *A History of Muslim Historiography*. Franz Rosenthal. Leiden, 1952.
- IsC *Islamic Culture*. Hyderabad (India).



- IA *al-Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām.* Abū Muḥammad 'Alī b. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥazm. Cairo, 1345-47 A.H. 8 parts.
- IMA *al-Istī 'āb fī Ma'rīfat al-Aṣḥāb.* Abū 'Umar Yūsuf b. 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Abd al-Barr. Hyderabad (India), 1318 A.H.
- IS *Irshād al-Sārī* (commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*). Aḥmad b. Muḥammad a-Qaṣṭallānī. Būlāq, 1285 A.H.
- ITS *al-Iṣābah fī Tam'yīz al-Ṣaḥābah.* Ibn Hajar 'Asqalānī. Ed. by Muḥammad Wajih, A. Sprenger *et al.* Calcutta (Asiatic Society), 1856-88. 3 vols.
- JA *Jamharat Ansāb al-'Arab.* Abū Muḥammad 'Alī b. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥazm. MS. (Library of M. Z. Siddiqi).
- JASB *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.* Calcutta.
- JB1 *Jāmi Bayān al-'Ilm w' Faḍlihī.* Abū 'Umar Yūsuf b. 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Abd al-Barr. Cairo, n.d. 2 vols.
- JRAS *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.* London.
- JT *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī* (with *Kitāb al-Shamā'il* and *Kitāb al-'Ilal*). Abū 'Isā Muḥammad b. 'Isā al-Tirmidhī. Delhi, 1315 A.H. 2 vols.
- JT2 —Delhi, 1350 A.H.
- JT (Ah) —With commentary (*Tuḥfat al-Aḥwadhī*) by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Mubārakpūrī. Delhi, 1346-1353 A.H. 4 vols.
- KAg *Kitāb al-Aghānī.* Abū al-Faraj Iṣbahānī. Ed. by Aḥmad al-Shinqīṭī. Cairo, 1323 A.H. 21 parts.
- KAS *Kitāb al-Ansāb.* 'Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad al-Sam'ānī. With an intro. by D.S. Margoliouth. Leiden, 1912. E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series.



- KI *Kitāb al-Imdād.* Jamāl al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh b. Sālīm al-Basrī al-Makkī. Hyderabad (India), 1327, A.H.
- KIA *Tā'rikh al-Kāmil.* Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Athīr. Cairo, 1301 A.H.
- KIF *Kashṣhāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn.* Muḥammad 'Alī Tahānawī. Ed. by A. Sprenger. Calcutta, 1854.
- KK *Kitāb al-Kāmil.* Abū al-'Abbās Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Mubarrad. Ed. by W. Wright. Leipzig, 1864. 2 vols. (12 parts)
- KKi *Kitāb al-Kifāyah.* al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī. Published with an intro. by Y. Eche. 1949.
- KQ *Kitāb al-Wulāt w' Kitāb al-Quḍāt.* Abū 'Umar Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Kīndī al-Miṣrī. Leiden, 1912. E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series.
- KZ *Kashf al-Zunūn.* Muṣṭafa b. 'Abd Allāh Ḥājī Khalīfah. Ed. by Gustav Flügel. Leipzig, 1835-42. 6 vols.
- LH *A Literary History of the Arabs.* Reynold A. Nicholson. Cambridge University Press, 1930.
- IM *Lisān al-Mīzān.* Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī. Hyderabad (India), 1329-31 A. H. 6 vols.
- LMu *Life of Mahomet.* William Muir. Ed. by T. H. Weir. Edinburgh, 1912.
- Mhb *The Mahabharata.* Tr. into English by P. C. Roy. Calcutta, 1883.
- Mis *Mishkāṭ al-Maṣābiḥ.* Walīy al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Khaṭīb al-'Umarī al-Tibrizī. Lucknow, 1326 A. H.
- MAA *Muqaddimah* (to a Persian commentary on Mis.). 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Dihlawī. Delhi, 1256 A.H.



- MAH *Musnad*. al-Imām Abū 'Abd Allāh Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibn Ḥanbal. Ed. by Muḥammad Ghamrāwī. Egypt, 1313 A. H. 6 vols.
- MAH2 Ed. by Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir. Cairo, 1949-55. (vols. i-xvi).
- MAT *Musnad*. Abū Dā'ūd al-Ṭayālīsī. Hyderabad (India), 1321 A.H.
- MBn *Mu'jam al-Buldān*. Abū 'Abd Allāh Yāqūt b. 'Abd Allāh. Ed. by F. Wüstenfeld. Leipzig, 1924, 6 vols.
- MFB *Muqaddimah Fath al-Bārī*. Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī. Delhi, 1302 A.H.
- MIi *Mīzān al-I'tidāl fī Naqd al-Rijāl*. Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī. Egypt, 1325 A.H. 3 vols.
- MIS *'Uṭum al-Ḥadīth (Muqaddimah Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ)*. 'Uthmān b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ. Egypt, 1326 A.H.
- ML *al-Mawāhib al-Ladunniyah*. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Qaṣṭallānī. With a commentary by Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Bāqī al-Zarqānī. Egypt, 1291 A.H. 8 vols.
- MSn *Maṣābiḥ al-Sunnah*. Ḥusayn b. Mas'ūd al-Shāfi 'ī al-Baghawī. Cairo, n.d. 2 vols.
- MSt *Muhammedanische Studien*. Ignaz Goldziher. Halle, 1889.
- MUd *Mu'jam al-Udabā'*. Abū 'Abd Allāh Yāqūt b. 'Abd Allāh. Ed. by D. S. Margoliouth. 2nd ed. London, 1923-25.
- NA *N'r al-Anwār* (commentary on *al-Manār*). Mullā Jīwan. Calcutta, 1359/1940.
- NS *Tā'rikh al-N'r al-Sāfir 'an Akhbār al-Qarn al-'Āshir*. Muḥ'iy al-Dīn 'Abd al-Qādir al-'Aydārūsī. Ed. by Muḥammad Rashīd al-Ṣaffār. Baghdad, 1353 A.H.



- NSM      *Commentary on Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim.* Abū Zakariyā Yahya al-Nawāwī.
- NT        *Nafḥ al-Ṭib.* Aḥmad al-Maghribī al-Maqqari. Cairo, 1302 A.H.
- OIS        *The Origins of the Islamic State.* (Tr. of FBn). Phillipp Hitti, Francis Clark Murgotten. Columbia University, 1924.
- OC        *Culturgeschichte des Orients.* Von Kremer. Tr. (as *Orient under the Caliphs*) by S. Khudā Bakhsh. Calcutta University, 1920.
- OPC        *Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in the Oriental Public Library at Bankipore.* Patna, 1920 (vol. v, part 1) ; 1925 (vol. v, part 2) ; 1927 (vol. xii).
- QT        *Qitf al-Thamar.* Ṣāliḥ. b. Muḥammad 'Umarī. Hyderabad (India), 1328 A.H.
- RAH        *Reste Arabischen Heidentums.* J. Wellhausen. Berlin, 1897.
- RFUH       *Risālah dar Fann-i-Uṣul-i-Ḥādīth ('Ujālah-i-Nāfi'ah).* Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Dihlawī. Delhi, 1255 A.H.
- RSh        *Risālah.* al-Imām Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'i. Cairo, 1312 A.H.
- Sh        *Der Imam el-Schāfi'i : seine Schüler und Anhänger bis zum J. 300 d.H.* F. Wüstenfeld. Göttingen, 1890.
- ShD        *Shadharāt al-Dhahab.* Abū al-Fidā 'Abd al-Ḥa'iy Ibn 'Imād al-Ḥanbalī. Cairo, 1351 A.H. 8 vols.
- SAD        *Sunan.* Abū Dā'ūd Sijistānī. Ed. by 'Abd al Aḥad. Delhi, 1346 A.H. 2 vols.
- SAP        *Studies in Arabic and Persian Medical Literature.* Muḥammad Zubayr Ṣiddīqī. Calcutta University, 1959.



- SB *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ*. Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ismā'il al-Bukhārī. Ed. by Muḥammad al-Zuhri. Egypt, 1309 A.H.
- SD *Sunan*. Abū Muḥammad al-Dārimī. Ed. by 'Abd al-Rashīd al-Kāshmīrī. Kanpur, 1292-93 A.H.
- SDq *Sunan*. 'Alī b. 'Umar al-Dāraquṭnī. Ed. by Shams al-Ḥaqq 'Azīmābādī. Delhi, n.d.
- SHM *Ṣaḥīfah Hammām b. Munabbih*. Hammām b. Munabbih. Ed. by Hamidullah. 5th ed. Paris, 1380 A.H.
- SIM *Sunan*. Ibn Mājah Qazwīnī. Delhi, 1333 A.H.
- SM *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī. Delhi, 1309 A.H.
- SMT Commentary on Imām Mālik's *Muwatṭā'*. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Bāqī al-Zarqānī. Egypt, 1310 A.H.
- SN *Sīrat al-Nabī*. Shiblī Nu'mānī. A'zamgarh, 1339 A.H.
- SUA *Sīrat 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz*. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn al-Jauzī. Egypt, 1331 A.H.
- TA *Tahdhīb al-Asmā'*. Abū Zakariyā Yaḥyā al-Nawāwī. Ed. by F. Wüstenfeld, Göttingen, 1842-47.
- TB *Tā'rikh Baghdād*. Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghādī. Cairo, 1349 A.H. 14 vols.
- TBT *Tā'rikh Baghdād*. Ṭayfūr Aḥmad b. Abī Ṭāhir. (Vol. vi) translated into German by H. Keller. Leipzig, 1908.
- TD *Tā'rikh Dimashq (al-Tā'rikh al-Kabīr)*. Abū al-Qāsim 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan Ibn al-'Asākir. Ed. by 'Abd al-Qādir Badrān. Syria, 1332 A.H.
- TFA *Talqīḥ Fuhūm Ahl al-Athar*. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn al-Jauzī. Ed. by Muḥammad Yūsuf Barelvi. Delhi, n.d.



- TH *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥuffāẓ* abridgement of TdH). Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī. Ed. by F. Wüstenfeld. Göttingen, 1833.
- TdH *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāẓ*. Shams al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī. Ed. by Saiyid Muṣṭafa 'Alī. Hyderabad (India), 1330 A.H. 4 vols.
- Tim *Taq'yid al-'Ilm*. Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī. Ed. by Yūsuf al-'Ishsh. Damascus, 1949.
- TI *The Traditions of Islam*. Alfred Guillaume. Oxford, 1924.
- TIS *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*. Muḥammad Ibn Sa'd, kātib al-Wāqidi. Ed. by Edward Sachau *et al.* Leiden, 1904-18.
- TK *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyah al-Kubra*. Tāj al-Dīn Abū Naṣr 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Subkī. Egypt.
- TKh *Tā'rikh al-Khamīs*. Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad Diyār-bekrī. Egypt, 1309 (?) A.H.
- TN *Taujih al-Nazar ila Uṣūl al-Athar*. Ṭāhir b. Ṣāliḥ al-Jazā'irī. Egypt, 1328 A.H.
- TR *Tadrib al-Rāwī* (commentary on Abū Zakariyā Yaḥyā al-Nawāwī's *al-Taqrīb w'al-Taysīr*). Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī. Egypt, 1307 A.H.
- TT *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*. Ibn Hajar 'Asqalānī. Hyderabad (India) 1326 A.H. 12 vols.
- UGh *Usd al-Ghābah fī Ma'rifat al-Ṣaḥābah*. 'Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr. Egypt, 1280 A.H. 5 vols.
- UH *Ma'rifat 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*. al-Ḥākim Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Nishāpūrī. Ed. by Mu'azzam Ḥusayan. Cairo, 1937.

- WA      *Wafayāt al-A'yān*. Ibn Khallikān. Ed. by F. Wüstenfeld. Göttingen, 1835. 2 vols.
- YD      *Yatimat al-Dahr*. Abū Manṣūr 'Abd al-Malik al-Tha'ālibī. Egẏpt, 1352 A.H. 4 vols.
- ZDMG   *Zeitschrift der deutschen moregenlandischen Gesellschaft*. Leipzig.
- ZM      *Ẓād al-Ma'ād*. Ibn Qayyim Jauẓiyyah. Kanpur, 1298 A.H.
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## INTRODUCTION

The history of the origin, development and criticism of *Hadith* Literature is an important as well as an interesting subject.

It is important, because it serves as a source of information for the history of pre-Islamic Arabia and of early Islam, and for the development of Arabic Literature as well as of Islamic thought in general and of Islamic law in particular. It also played an important part in establishing a common culture for the whole Islamic world.<sup>1</sup> It is still wielding a great influence on the minds of the Muslims,<sup>2</sup> and is bound to influence them in the future also. It is interesting because it throws a flood of light on the psychology of the Traditionists—the pious as well as the Forgers—and on many of the political and cultural movements which originated and developed in the various parts of the Muslim world throughout the past history of Islam. It also contains many of the basic ideas concerning Democracy, the equality of all men and nations, condemnation of Aggression, development of the power to defend oneself and the establishment of peace in the world, and many other basic problems which are agitating the minds of modern peoples.

The Muslims (since the life-time of their Prophet)<sup>3</sup> and the Western scholars and Orientalists (for about the last 200 years), therefore, took keen interest in *Hadith*, in *Hadith* Literature and in its criticism. During the time of the Prophet,

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(1) This has been shown by Prof. J. Fück in his learned article ("Die Rolle des Traditionalismus im Islam"), ZDMG, 1939, pp. 1-32.

(2) TI, Preface, 6.

(3) The thesis of Schacht (in OMJ) that *Hadith* was not accepted as an authority until the time of al-Shafi'i is refuted by the general acceptance by all the traditionists as well as the Orientalists of the fact that not long after the Prophet's death a large number of traditions were forged by all the political, sectarian and other Muslim parties in support of what they asserted. For if *Hadith* was not accepted by all the Muslims as an authority, there would be no sense in forging *Aḥādith* for any purpose.



his Companions eagerly learnt *Aḥādīth* from him. Many of them wrote them down, cultivated them, and spread them among their co-religionists. A large number of *Aḥādīth* were collected and spread throughout the vast Islamic empire partly in writing, and partly orally, before the end of the first century of Hijra. During the following centuries, efforts were made to compile more or less exhaustive collections of *Aḥādīth* which were considered to be reliable and long, arduous journeys were undertaken for this purpose. Thus, partly in the second century of the Hijra, but largely in the third, important collections of such *Aḥādīth* as were considered to be reliable were compiled and published. As some *Aḥādīth* were forged during the life-time of the Prophet, care was taken since that very period, to determine their reliability. For the sake of it, was introduced the system of *Isnād* which was applied to *Hadīth* at an early period, and was treated as a necessary part of every individual tradition, not long after the beginning of the second century of Hijra and by and by, there were developed various branches of literature which served as foundations for the criticism of every individual *Hadīth*. As the *Isnād* was not considered to be the sure guarantee of the genuineness of a *Hadīth*, certain general principles were laid down in order to test the truth of its text. It has been, however, generally accepted by the traditionists that the truth of a tradition is determined by the faculty that is developed by the specialists in the subject, by means of long continuous study of traditions and by means of constant discussions about them with other specialists, and by acquiring a deep insight into them. All these matters have been discussed briefly in this book.

The Western scholars have been taking keen interest in *Hadīth* collections as well as in other branches of literature connected with *Hadīth*, for about 200 years. They made a critical study of *Hadīth*, edited and published many of the original Arabic works on these subjects, translated some of them into their own languages, and wrote learned treatises and critical articles on some of the intricate basic problems relating to *Hadīth* Literature. Some of them published a



comprehensive and highly critical account of the origin and the development of the subject, discussed many fundamental problems relating to it, and described most of the important *Hadith* works, and pointed out their merits and demerits. A brief account of their important contributions to the study of *Hadith* (till about 1920) has been given by D. Gustav pfannmüller in his *Handbuch der Islam Literatur* (Berlin, Leipzig, 1923).

Among them, A. Sprenger, Edward E. Salisbury, O. V. Houdas, L. Krehl, I. Goldziher, T. W. Juynboll, J. Horowitz and A. J. Wensinck made important contributions to the study of our subject, and W. Watt, J. Schacht, J. Robson and some others are still engaged in the keen critical study of *Hadith* Literature, and are making some important contributions to its history and criticism.

They raised some fundamental problems with regard to *Hadith* Literature and its development, and tried to solve them according to the modern methods of literary and historical criticism on the basis of their own researches. The first Western scholar to do so was Sprenger. (as he himself claimed) In the introduction to his *Das Leben und die Lehre des Muhammad*, he summarized the results of his researches in *Hadith* Literature. William Muir also discussed, in the introduction to his *Life of Muhammad*, the reliability of *Hadith*. But they were far surpassed in their treatment and criticism of *Hadith* Literature by I. Goldziher who was endowed by nature with strong intellect and keen critical faculty, and who had made a thorough study of Jewish and Christian literature. He chose Arabic language and literature in general, and *Hadith* Literature in particular, as some of the special fields for his research. He published numerous learned articles, treatises and books on some of the collections of *Hadith* as well as on the history of the material and formal development of the subject. The most important of his works for our purpose is the second volume of the *Muhammedanische Studien*. In it, after having discussed some preliminary matters, Goldziher discussed the political, the sectarian and the cultural movements in Islamic history which influenced the material



and formal development of *Hadīth* Literature. He has dealt with the important *Hadīth* collections, and pointed out their merits and defects according to his own view. At the end of the book, he has also shown the influence of the New Testament as well as of the neo-Platonic and Gnostic ideas on our subject. His general conclusion is that *Hadīth* Literature does not represent the original ideas and ideals of the Prophet of Islam, but that it reflects those of a much later period. It, therefore, cannot serve as a source for the ideas preached by Muhammad, but serves as an important source of information for the history of the development of the different aspects of Islamic culture of the later periods under the foreign non-Islamic influences.

Far more important than the contributions of Sprenger, Goldziher and others is the preparation of the *Concordance and Indices of Muslim Tradition* which is based upon the six canonical collections, the *Sunan* of al-Dārimī, the *Muwatṭā* of Imām Mālik and the *Musnad* of Aḥmad b. ḥanbal. It was originally planned by Juynboll, Wensinck, Horovitz and some other Orientalists, was patronized by the Royal Academy of Amsterdam, and aided and helped by more than a dozen of Academies and educational institutions of different countries. The work has been continued by de Haas and assisted by M. Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī and others. The actual work of preparing the Concordance was begun in 1916 and is continued by about 40 scholars of different countries. The first part of it was published in 1936, and the twenty-sixth part in 1961. It consists of all the important expressions occurring in any of the works mentioned above, in alphabetical order, the personal names etc. being reserved for the last parts. This huge work is of great permanent value, and is sure to serve as a solid foundation for all the important future works on the various aspects of Arabic literature in general and of *Hadīth* Literature in particular.

The Western scholars, however, introduced into the study of *Hadīth* the modern critical method of literary and historical research, and tried to show that *Hadīth* Literature in general



is of apocryphal origin and doubtful character. They give the following reasons in support of their conclusion:—

(a) The *Hadīth* Literature is largely based on mere oral transmission for more than a century, and such of the *Hadīth* collections as we have received do not refer to any records of *Aḥādīth* which may have been made at an earlier period.

(b) The number of *Aḥādīth* in the later collections is much larger than the number of those contained in the earlier collections or in the early works on Islamic law. This according to them, shows that most of the *Aḥādīth* are of doubtful character.

(c) The *Aḥādīth* reported by the younger Companions are much larger in number than those related by the older Companions, which, they assert, shows that the *Isnāds* attached to these *Aḥādīth* are not quite reliable.

(d) The system of *Isnād* was arbitrarily applied to *Hadīth* not earlier than the end of the first century of Hijra; and it is no proof of genuineness of the tradition to which it is attached.

(e) Many of the *Aḥādīth* contradict one another.

(f) There is definite evidence of large-scale forgery of the *Isnād* as well as of the text of *Aḥādīth*.

(g) The Muslim critics confined their criticism of *Hadīth* to *Isnād* only, and never criticised its text.

Many of these questions have been discussed in detail in chapters I, VI and VIII of this book. Here only a brief comment upon them may be made:—

(a) It has already been shown by Goldziher that more than a dozen of *Ṣaḥīfahs* containing *Aḥādīth* of the Prophet were compiled by the Companions and the Followers. As for the want of reference to them in the later *Hadīth* collections, it has been explained by A. Sprenger as being due to the fact that the early traditionists referred to the authors of the books from whom they received them through their own teachers, instead of referring to the books themselves which were liable



to be interpolated and forged. He has demonstrated it with reference to the practice followed by Wāqidi and Ibn Sa'd;<sup>1</sup> and has also collected a good deal of material with regard to the writing down of *Hadīth* and the existence of books in Arabic during the pre-Islamic and the early Islamic period, in his article "On the origin and progress of writing down historical facts among the Musalmans".<sup>2</sup> The publication of the *Ṣaḥīfah* of Hammām b. Munabbih by Dr. Ḥamidullah, and the identification of its contents with that of a part of the *Musnad* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal with very slight differences, strongly support the theory of Sprenger.

(b) The increase in the number of *Aḥādīth* in the later collections (of the 3rd Century A.H.) may be appreciated by those who are conversant with the history of the collection of the *Aḥādīth*. The early compilers did not know as many traditions as were known to the later collectors. For, simultaneously with the expansion of the Islamic empire in the various countries, the custodians of the *Aḥādīth* spread throughout these dominions. It was after the seekers of the *Aḥādīth* had travelled through all these countries (situated wide apart from one another), and collected together the traditions known to each of the traditionists living there and narrated them to their own disciples, that larger and larger collections of the *Aḥādīth* could be compiled during the second and the third centuries.

(c) It is thought by some of the Western scholars that the natural process was that those who associated with the Prophet of Islam for a long period should have reported more traditions of him than those who associated with him for a short period. But actually this was not so. The younger generation of the Companions have reported a much larger number of traditions than the older Companions. From this they conclude that the *Isnāds* of the younger Companions were forged. But the question has already been considered by the traditionists themselves. They say that the older Companions, passed away soon after the death of the Prophet, and,

(1) JASB, vol. XXV, p. 62. (2) *Ibid.* pp. 303-329 and 375-381.



therefore, they could not report all the traditions known to them, whereas the younger Companions—e.g. Ibn ‘Abbās, Abū Hurayra, ‘Ā’ishah and others—lived for a much longer period, and could narrate to their students most of the traditions known to them. J. Fück has pointed out that this fact is in favour of the veracity of the traditionists; for if all the *Isnāds* were forged by them, they would have tried to produce *Isnāds* from the older Companions in larger numbers.<sup>1</sup> “That the traditionists did not do this”, says Prof. Robson, “makes us wonder whether there may not be more truth than we have imagined in what they transmit”.<sup>2</sup>

(d) As the *Isnād*, its origin, development and importance has been discussed in chapter VI of this book, and J. Robson has thoroughly dealt with the views of the Muslim doctors as well as those of all the Western scholars on it,<sup>3</sup> the readers are referred to the observations contained in these sources.

(e) There is no doubt that a large number of the *Aḥādīth* are contradictory to one another. But to conclude from the contradictions between them, that at least most of them are forged is not quite warranted. It is natural for the leader of a great, progressive, fast-developing movement to change his instructions to his followers, at its various stages according to the requirements of the circumstances. Certainly, Islam was such a movement. One should not, therefore, be surprised if its leader issued at the various stages of its development, or even simultaneously, to his different followers, such instructions or recommendations as contradicted or differed from one another. The contradiction between the *Aḥādīth* prohibiting their writing down, and those permitting it, for example, has been explained by pointing out that the permissive *Aḥādīth*, being later in origin, cancelled the prohibitive ones. There is nothing particularly ingenious in this explanation. In certain cases, the contradictions have been

(1) ZDMG, 1939, p. 17.

(2) *The Isnād in Muslim Tradition*, p. 26.

(3) *Ibid.*



explained by pointing out the different circumstances in which the contradictory instructions were given. In various other cases, the contradictions have been explained by pointing out the ideas common between them which were expressed in various ways at different times. There are, of course, cases in which *Aḥādīth* were forged, contradicting the import of the genuine ones, as has been pointed out by the Muslim doctors. But one may be surprised to find that some of the Western scholars have quoted *Aḥādīth* which have been declared by the Muslim authorities on the subject, as forged ones—in order to prove contradictions between them.

(f) The large-scale forgery of *Isnāds* as well as of the text of traditions and of parts of them has been accepted by all the Muslim doctors, and has been described at length in chapter VI of this book. The development of considerable literature on the *Mawḍū'āt* is a sure and sufficient evidence of it. The *Aḥādīth* contained in them are discarded by the traditionists. But one may be surprised to find that some of the Western scholars have used them not only to show the tendency of the minds of the Muslims at any particular period, but also to prove that *Hadīth* literature in general is unreliable. In this connection, they have also interpreted some *Aḥādīth* differently from their interpretation by the Muslim traditionists, and at times they have declared such *Aḥādīth* as are accepted by the traditionists as genuine, to have been forged, (on account of their own baseless presumptions). Here are some examples of each of them :—

(f)1. Goldziher<sup>1</sup> and (following him) Guillaume<sup>2</sup> have quoted a *Hadīth* from al-Tirmidhī<sup>3</sup> and said: "Ibn 'Umar reports that Muḥammad ordered all dogs to be killed save sheep-dogs and hounds. Abū Hurayra added the word *au Zar'in* (or field dogs.) Whereupon Ibn 'Umar makes the remark that Abū Hurayra owned cultivated land. A better illustration of the underlying motive of some *Hadīth* can hardly be found."

(1) MSt, ii, 49.

(2) TI, 78

(3) JT, i, 281.



Goldziher, having quoted the above *Hadith*, says that the remark of Ibn 'Umar proves that even the earliest transmitters were not free from selfish motives. But the Muslim traditionists have expalined the remark of Ibn 'Umar to mean that Abū Hurayra, having personal interest in the subject-matter of the *Hadith*, had better reason to know exactly what its wording was.<sup>1</sup> Hence it shows the greater authority of Abū Hurayra on this *Hadith* than that of Ibn 'Umar himself.

(f)2. Goldziher<sup>2</sup> and (following him) Guillaume<sup>3</sup> assert that the *Hadith* reported by al-Bukhāri: "Make journey (for pilgrimage) only to three places—al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, the Mosque of the Prophet, and the Mosque of Jerusalem" was forged by al-Zuhri in order to help 'Abd al-Malik against his rival, 'Abd Allāh b. Zubayr. But J. Fück remarks that this assertion is chronologically unsound. Ibn al-Zubayr was killed in 73 A.H., and Zuhri was born in 51 A. H. or even later. He, therefore, must have been too young at the time of Ibn al-Zubayr's death to have become an authority on traditions. This assertion is wrong also because the authority of al-Zuhri on this *Hadith* (the famous Sa'id b. al-Musaiyib who died in 94 A.H.) was still living, and, therefore, his name could not have been misused by al-Zuhri. Again, al-Zuhri is not the only traditionist who reported this tradition from Sa'id.<sup>4</sup>

(f)3. Here is another glaring example of unfounded assertion by one of the greatest of the Western scholars of *Hadith*, Goldzier. He asserts that after the fabrication of *Hadith* had become a common and established practice among the traditionists, they tried to stop it by forging a *Hadith* that prohibited Forgery. The well-known *Hadith* (in which the Prophet is reported to have said that he who falsely attributed anything to him made his abode in Hell) and other similar traditions were, according to Goldziher, fabricated in order to stop fabrication.<sup>5</sup> But this *Hadith* has been reported

(1) JT (Ah), ii, 350.

(2) MSt, ii, 35.

(3) TI, 47-48.

(4) ZDMG, 1939 pp. 23f.

(5) MSt, ii, 131 ff.



by more than 70 Companions and numerous independent chains of authorities. It is found in different forms in all the important *Hadīth*-collections, and has been accepted by all the traditionists as one of the most reliable traditions. There is absolutely no reason to doubt its authenticity. Fabrications were made in the name of the Prophets before Muhammad, of which he was aware, and to which reference is made in the *Qur'ān*. Forged traditions were attributed to Muhammad himself during his life-time. In these circumstances, it may well be expected that the great Leader should warn his followers against this dangerous practice. Goldziher knew all these facts. Still he asserted that these *Aḥādīth* were forged ones—without giving any reason whatsoever. And Guillaume has followed him in the same fashion.<sup>1</sup>

(g) It is true that in all the *Muṣnaf* collections of *Aḥādīth*, they are arranged in books and chapters according to their subject-matters, and at the end of each *Hadīth* is added a short description of its *Isnād* in technical terms, and no notice is taken of the character of its text. But in their commentaries, the texts of the *Aḥādīth* also are criticised by the traditionists. This criticism follows the principles laid down by the traditionists. These principles and their illustrations (from a commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and from some other works on traditions) are given in the last chapter of this book. It appears, however, that the function of the collection of the *Aḥādīth* and of their formal criticism (the criticism of the *Isnād*) was reserved for their collectors, whereas the function of their material criticism (the criticism of the text) was left for the Jurists and the commentators of the various collections.

According to the Muslim critics, the *Isnād* is a good evidence, but not an absolute guarantee of the truth of the text of the traditions. And if the text of a tradition is contrary to reason and common experience, or to the explicit text of the *Qur'ān*, or to the text of the *Mutawātir* traditions, or to the Consensus, it is a proof of its having been forged.

(1) *TI*, 78f.

These and other principles of the criticism of the text of a *Hadith* (which are described about the end of this book) compare favourably with the criteria laid down by William Muir<sup>1</sup> and other Western scholars for judging the reliability of traditions.

At the end, it must be added that in this book no attempt has been made to deal with the Shī'ah traditions, for the present writer does not consider himself qualified for it.



# CHAPTER I

## HADĪTH

### ITS IMPORTANCE, ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HADĪTH

The word *ḥadīth* primarily means 'new'. It is used as opposed to *qadīm* which means 'old'. From this followed the use of the term for a piece of news, a tale, a story or a report—be it historical or legendary, true or false, relating to the present or to the past immediate or remote. In this sense the word has been used by the pre-Islamic poets, and in the Qur'ān and the Tradition of the Prophet. The story-tellers also were called *Huddāth*.

This general connotation of the word *Ḥadīth* has, like that of many other words (e.g. *ṣalāt*, *sujūd*, *rukū'*, *zakāt*, etc.), been changed under the far-reaching influence of Islam. The Muslims since the very life-time of Muḥammad called the reports with regard to his sayings and doings the best *ḥadīth*, and by and by its use was confined to the reports of Muḥammad's words and deeds only.

Muḥammad himself as well as his immediate followers have used it in this sense more than once. When Muḥammad said to Abū Hurayra that he knew his anxiety about the *Ḥadīth*,<sup>1</sup> he did not mean but his own *Ḥadīth*. 'Utba referred to this kind of *Ḥadīth* only when he said that Ibn 'Abbās related only two or three *Aḥādīth* in a month<sup>2</sup>. 'Umar I did not mean but the *Ḥadīth*<sup>3</sup> of Muḥammad when he asked his friends not to relate too many *Aḥādīth*.<sup>4</sup> When 'Alī said: "If you

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(1) SB, i, 20.

(2) SD, p. 46.

(3) TdH, vol. I, p. 6.

(4) TDH, i, 7.



write the *Hadith* write it with the *Isnād*," he meant the *Hadith* of Muḥammad only.<sup>1</sup>

### HADĪTH AND SUNNAH

With this significance of the word *Hadith* is very closely connected the connotation of the word *Sunnah* which originally meant 'precedent' and 'custom'<sup>2</sup> and which has been used by the Muslims for the doings and practices of Muḥammad only. Some of the Muslim writers, as Goldziher says,<sup>3</sup> have completely identified the significance of these two philologically un-connected words; others have drawn a line of distinction between their connotations. But the distinction between them is only theoretical, as has been pointed out by him.

### HADĪTH—A SUBJECT OF KEEN INTEREST

The *Hadith* in this sense—i.e., the report of the sayings and the doings of Muḥammad—has been a subject of keen interest among the Muslims since the very life-time of the Prophet himself. His remarkable, stirring career could not have failed to draw the serious attention of his people. Having lived forty years of quiet, almost uneventful life, he started one of the most stirring and the greatest movements which influenced all the various aspects of human thought and life for all times, and he achieved his objective with astounding success. At the very beginning of his life as a prophet he struck at the very root of the firm beliefs and the long-established customs of the pagan Arabs. They hated and boycotted him, insulted and injured him, and compelled him to leave his home and hearth for a distant town. But he, by his implicit faith in his cause, his tenacity of purpose and his never failing zeal for his mission within ten years from his exile, destroyed the established prestige of the Quraysh of Mecca, shook the foundations of the pagan customs and the heathen beliefs of the Arabs,

(1) ML, v, 454

(2) *Mufaḍḍaliyāt*, ed. G.J. Lyall, Oxford, 1918-21. 2 vols. LXVI. 5; CXXIII. 16.

(3) MSt, vol. II, pp. 11-13.,



humbled down their boastful tribal chiefs, persuaded the Christians of Najrān to come to terms with him, demolished the strongholds of the Jews in Arabia, and founded a theocracy which was destined to measure sword simultaneously and successfully with the tremendous, well-equipped and trained armies of Persia and Byzantium, and to influence the thought and life of mankind for ever.

Such a career was bound to attract the attention of the people who witnessed it. Muḥammad, with his many-sided activities and revolutionary utterances, could not have passed unobserved and unnoticed by the people among whom he lived and moved. At least, since the time he began to preach his mission, both his deadly foes and his faithful and devoted friends must have been equally interested in him as well as in his sayings and doings.

To his enemies he had been a revolutionary bent upon destroying the whole fabric of their society whose activities they keenly watched in order to stop the progress of his mission. His utterances must have served them as an important topics for reflection, conversation and sometimes even heated discussions. They watched his movements so closely and carefully that many of his secretly conceived plans could not escape their watchful eyes. Their leader, Abū Lahab, kept close to him when he preached his faith to the Arabian tribes, and dissuaded them from paying any attention to his peaceful preachings.<sup>1</sup> They discovered his plans when his followers were migrating from Arabia to Abyssinia. They followed their footsteps in order to try to stop them from getting out of their clutches.<sup>2</sup> They found out that he talked with the people of Madīnah when he conversed with them in secret, and threatened the Madinites with open hostility if they continued their friendship with him.<sup>3</sup>

The interest of the followers of Muḥammad in him and in his sayings and doings was naturally greater than that of his

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(1) TIS, vol. I, part I, p. 145.

(2) *Ibid.* p. 136.

(3) *Ibid.* vol. I, part I, p. 136.



foes. They had accepted him as their sole guide and prophet. They had completely identified themselves with him in his struggle against the Quraysh and the other tribes. With his future and with the future of the faith revealed to him was bound up their own future. On his success depended their own success. All his actions served them as a precedent (*sunnah*), every word falling from his lips was a law to them, and all his actions were virtuous in their eyes, which they wanted to follow as faithfully as they could. When he chose a gold ring for himself, his friends also put it on; and when he put it off, threw it away, and put on a silver ring instead, they also followed his example.<sup>1</sup> If he offered prayers at midnight, all his friends wanted to do the same, and he himself had to stop them from so doing.<sup>2</sup> If he fasted continuously for more than a day, his followers also desired to do the same, and he had to explain to them his special privileges.<sup>3</sup> Zayd b. Khālīd spent one whole night at his door in order to see him offer his night prayers.<sup>4</sup> Nawwās b. Sam'ān stayed at Madīnah for one whole year in order to enquire from Muḥammad what was virtue and what was vice.<sup>5</sup> Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī observed keenly how long he kept standing in his afternoon prayers.<sup>6</sup> Ibn 'Umar counted how many times he asked pardon of God in one sitting.<sup>7</sup>

The *Hadīth* in this sense of the reports of the sayings and doings of Muḥammad has been a subject of keen pursuit and constant study by the Muslims throughout the Muslim world since the very beginning of the history of Islam up to the present times. During the life-time of Muḥammad many of his Companions tried to get by heart whatever he said,

(1) SB. *k. al-I'tisām, b. al-iqtidā' b' af'āl al-nabī*, vol. IV, p. 166.

(2) *Ibid. k. al-tahajjud, b. salāt al-layl*, vol. I, p. 136.

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *Ibid. k. al-I'tisām, b. al-ta'ammuq*, vol. iv, p. 166.

(5) SM, *k. al-Birr, b. tafsīr al-Birr*, vol. ii, p. 314.

(6) SAD, "*Istighfār*", vol. i, p. 119.

(7) *Ibid. "Takhfīf al-Ukhrayayn"*, vol. i, p. 124.



and observed keenly whatever he did; and they reported these things to one another. Some of them wrote down what he said in *Ṣaḥīfas* which were later on read by them to their students, and which were preserved in their families and also by the Followers (*Tābi'ūn*). After the death of Muḥammad, when his Companions spread in various countries, some of them as well as their Followers undertook long arduous journeys, courted poverty and penury in order to collect them together. They founded independent branches of literature which would help them in understanding the *Ḥadīth* of their prophet and in testing its reliability and genuineness. They deduced various theological sciences from them. Their remarkable activity with regard to the preservation and propagation of *Ḥadīth* is unique in the literary history of the world. The stage of perfection upto which they developed the system of *Isnād* in *Ḥadīth*, the vast literature on the *Asmā' al-Rijāl* which they created as an aid to the formal criticism of Traditions, the literature on the *Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth* which serves as an aid to their material criticism, and the literature on the *Mawḍū'āt* which deals with what has been forged and fabricated in the name of Muḥammad, remain unparalleled in the literary history of the world even to-day.

The Companions of Muḥammad had so much respect and reverence for him that one of them collected his perspiration, and made a will that it should be sprinkled on his dead body before it was put into the grave.<sup>1</sup> Some of them vied and sometimes even quarrelled with one another in order to get the water left by him after performing his ablution, and considered it a privilege to drink it or to apply it to their bodies.<sup>2</sup> Some of them preserved carefully what was touched by him and used it as a cure for diseases.<sup>3</sup> Some of them presented to him their children for his blessings. Some of them considered it a privilege if their sons were accepted by him as his attendants.<sup>4</sup>

(1) SB, iv, 62.

(2) *Ibid*, k. *al-Waḍū'*, b. *Isti'māl fadl al-waḍū'*, vol. i, pp. 32-33.

(3) TIS, vol. viii, p. 234.

(4) TIS, vol. viii, p. 73.



## THE WRITING OF AHADĪTH

Many of these devoted Companions of Muḥammad, if not all of them, naturally hankered after the knowledge of what he said or did. Abū Hurayra kept his constant company for three years at the sacrifice of all worldly pursuits in order to see and hear what he did and said,<sup>1</sup> and regularly devoted a considerable time to getting by heart what he had heard from him.<sup>2</sup> 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ wrote down all that he heard from Muḥammad.<sup>3</sup> Abū Shihāb, Zayd and Ziyād also did the same.<sup>4</sup> 'Āzib, when asked by Abū Bakr to deliver his message to al-Barā', did not leave his company until he had related to him what he and Muḥammad had done when they came out of Mecca and were followed by the Quraysh.<sup>5</sup> 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, who was living at a distance from Madīnah and was unable to attend to Muḥammad every day, made an agreement with one of the Anṣār that they would attend him every alternate day and report to each other whatever they saw or heard from him.<sup>6</sup> Such others of his followers as failed to notice any of his sayings or doings (on account of being away from him) learnt the same from those who had heard them, taking great care about the veracity of their reporters. As a matter of fact, it is said to have been a common practice among the friends of Muḥammad that whenever any two of them met, one of them enquired from the other whether there was any *Hadīth* (the news of the sayings and the doings of the Prophet), and the other in his reply reported some sayings and doings of the Prophet.<sup>7</sup> This practice seems to have been in vogue at least among some Muslim scholars even so late as the end of the 8th century

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(1) TIS, vol. iv, part 2, p. 56.

(2) SD, p. 45.

(3) TIS, vol. ii, part 2, p. 125.

(4) LL, p. 67.

(5) TIS, vol. iv, part 2, p. 80.

(6) SB, k. 'Ilm, b. al-Tanāwub, vol. i, p. 19.

(7) ZDMG, vol. x, p. 2.



(A.H.), when Ismā'il 'Aqūli of Baghdad on meeting Ibrāhīm of Aleppo asked him, after the customary salutations, whether he knew any *Hadīth*. The latter in his answer recited some *Aḥādīth* from the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* with their *Isnāds*.<sup>1</sup>

Muḥammad himself attached a good deal of importance to the knowledge of his own *Hadīth*. He asked his friends and followers to make them as widely known as possible, taking care that they should not attribute to him anything falsely.<sup>2</sup> He asked his followers to acquire knowledge and teach it to others,<sup>3</sup> and while explaining knowledge, he included in it the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. The course of study prescribed by him to the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* included the Qur'ān, the *Sunnah* and the art of writing.<sup>4</sup> In the appointment of the state officials also he gave preference to those who combined the knowledge of the *Sunnah* with that of the Qur'ān. Such was the case with the appointment of the *Imāms*<sup>5</sup> and the *Qāḍīs*, and is likely to have been the case with other appointments also. He asked Mu'ādh when the latter was going out as governor of Yeman on what basis he would govern. "On the basis of the Qur'ān", Mu'ādh replied. "Suppose", said the Prophet, "that you do not find it in the Qur'ān". "Then on the basis of the *Sunnah*" answered Mu'adh.<sup>6</sup>

After the death of Muḥammad the importance of *Hadīth* grew greater and greater. Von Kremer rightly says:—"The life of the Prophet, his discourses and utterances, his actions, his silent approval and even his passive conduct, constituted next to the Qur'ān the second most important source of law for the young Muslim empire".<sup>7</sup> Von Kremer has correctly pointed out the importance of the *Hadīth* as a

(1) ZDMG, vol. x, P. 2

(2) *Mis. 'Ilm*, p. 32.

(3) *Ibid.* p. 35.

(4) SHM, p. 9.

(5) *Ibid.*

(6) TIS, vol. ii, part 2, p. 107.

(7) *Orient under the Caliphs*, p. 260.



source of Muhammadan law. But actually the part played by it in the development of Arabic literature is much greater than this. It is the *Hadīth* and the *Qur'ān* that have been the main cause of the origin of many branches of Arabic literature, e.g., History, Geography, the collection of the ancient Arabian poetry, Lexicography, etc. It will not be an exaggeration to say that the *Hadīth* and the *Qur'ān* had been the basis of all the scientific activities of the Arabs.

Thus, the *Hadīth* originated in the early life of the Prophet of Islam, developed largely throughout his life, and spread simultaneously with the spread of Islam throughout the vast Muslim dominions. The Muslim armies which conquered Syria, Palestine, Persia and Egypt included a large number of the Companions of Muḥammad, who carried his *Hadīth* wherever they went. Even the distant lands of North Africa and Spain<sup>1</sup> received the reports of Muḥammad's sayings and doings before the end of the first century. Similarly, the message of the *Sunnah* and the *Qur'ān* had been received by India before its conquest by Muslims before the end of the first century.<sup>2</sup>

### THE COLLECTION OF AḤADĪTH

*Hadīth* which thus spread throughout the vast Muslim dominions had been preserved for about a century partly in writing (in the form of laws and letters dictated by Muḥammad himself, and in the form of various *Ṣaḥīfahs* ascribed to many of his Companions), and partly in the memory of those who had associated with him and watched carefully his words and deeds. After the death of Muḥammad, 'Umar I intended to collect the *Aḥādīth*. He gave the matter his careful consideration for one whole month, invoking the help of God in his decision, and seeking the advice of his friends. But he had

(1) al-Munaydhir, a Companion, had visited Spain. See NT, vol. i, p. 130.

(2) See ch. I in *India's Contribution to the Study of Hadīth Literature*. By Muḥammad Ishāque, University of Dacca, 1955.



to give up the great project for the fear of the Qur'ān being neglected by the Muslims.<sup>1</sup>

'Umar II (61-101A.H.), the saintly caliph of the dynasty of the worldly Umayyads, initiated and partly carried out the tremendous task which was only thought of by his great predecessor whom he tried to follow in many respects. This saintly caliph had a great zeal for his religion which he tried to purify from the evils that had crept into it by the time he came to power.<sup>2</sup> The teaching and the collection of *Hadīth* naturally formed an important part of his plan. He appointed paid teachers to teach the Qur'ān to the ignorant Beduins,<sup>3</sup> supported and helped the teachers and students of *Fiqh*,<sup>4</sup> sent instructions to the governor of the Hijāz that weekly lectures should be delivered on *Hadīth*,<sup>5</sup> and sent out men well-versed in the subject to Egypt and North Africa as instructors to the Muslims living in those countries.<sup>6</sup>

Fearing the loss of *Aḥādīth*, he took steps towards their collection. To a great Traditionist, Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. Ḥazm (d. 100/719) who lived in Madīnah, he wrote to ask him to write down all the *Aḥādīth* of the Prophet and of 'Umar—particularly those he could learn from 'Amra, the daughter of 'Abd al-Raḥmān, who was at that time the best custodian of such *Aḥādīth* as were related by 'Ā'ishah.<sup>7</sup> 'Umar II is also reported to have asked Sa'd b. Ibrāhīm<sup>8</sup> and Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhri<sup>9</sup> to collect *Aḥādīth* in the form of books in order to have them circulated throughout his domi-

(1) TIS, vol. iii, part I, p. 206. However, 'Umar spread in various other ways the knowledge of *Hadīth* among Muslims living in various parts of the Caliphate.

(2) MSt, vol. 2, p. 34.

(3) SUA.

(4) *Ibid.*

(5) *Ibid.*

(6) NT, vol. i, p. 130.

(7) TIS, vol. ii, part 2, p. 134. SB, k. 'Ilm, b. kitābat vol. IMU, p. xxxiii.

(8) JBI, part I, p. 76.

(9) FM, p. 239.



nion. According to Abū Nu'aym's *History of Isfahan* (cited by Ibn Hajar),<sup>1</sup> 'Umar even wrote a circular letter asking the Traditionists living in the various parts of his dominion to collect in the form of books as many *Aḥādīth* as were available.<sup>2</sup>

The fact that these works have not been mentioned by any of the later writers on the subject, and that there appear to be some contradictions in later references to the persons concerned, has led an eminent Orientalist to hold that what has been attributed to 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz in connection with the collection of *Aḥādīth* is only an expression of what the Muslims would expect from the pious caliph.<sup>3</sup> But another eminent Orientalist, Dr. Sprenger, had already shown<sup>4</sup> that the early Muslim writers used to refer to the authors instead of referring to the books. As regards the contradictions, they are only apparent, and can be easily explained. Therefore, it is not merely an expression of what later Muslims expected from the pious caliph, but as a matter of fact all the attending circumstances point to the probability of what is attributed to him.

The great work initiated by 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz was helped by the spirit of the age, and the result was extensive. Abū Qalāba (d. 104 or 107 A.H.) is stated to have made a will of his books<sup>5</sup>. Makhūl (d. 116/734), who had travelled through Egypt and Syria and had lived for some time in Madīnah in order to acquire knowledge at all these places,<sup>6</sup> wrote a book on the *Sunnah* which has been mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm in his *Fihrist*<sup>7</sup>. al-Zuhri (d. 124/742) is stated by Ibn Sa'd to have

(1) FB, vol. i, p. 174.

(2) 'Asqalānī, *op. cit.*

(3) MSt., vol. ii, pp. 210-211. TrIs, pp. 18-19.

(4) A. Sprenger, "On the origin and progress of writing down historical facts among the Musulmans", JASB, vol. xxv, pp. 103ff., 1856.

(5) TdH, vol. i, p. 82.

(6) TdH, vol. i, p. 95.

(7) FN, pp. 225-27.



collected so many *Aḥādīth* that after his death his manuscripts needed beasts of burden for their removal.<sup>1</sup>

The early students and workers on the *Hadīth* were followed by various *Muḥaddithūn* who carried on the work begun by their predecessors almost simultaneously in various provinces of the vast Muslim empire. Of these collectors of *Aḥādīth*, 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Jurayj (d. 150/760) worked at Mecca, Sa'd b. 'Arūba (d. 157 A.H.) at Mesopotamia, al-Auzā'i (d. 159 A.H.) in Syria, Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 159 A.H.) at Madīnah, Zā'ida b. Qudāma (d. 160 A.H.) and Sufyān al-Thaurī (d. 160 A.H.) at Kufa, and Hammād b. Salāma (d. 165 A.H.) at Baṣra.<sup>2</sup>

As almost all these works are entirely lost, no opinion can be expressed on their plan, method or merit. But Ibn al-Nadīm who has mentioned these works has also given a short criticism in each case. He calls the works of Ibn Jurayj, Ibn 'Arūba, Auzā'i, Ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān and Zā'ida b. Qudāma works on the *Sunnah*, and says that they are arranged like books of *Fiqh*—in chapters devoted to its problems. They were probably works of the same type as the *Muwatṭā* of Imām Mālik who might have followed in the general plan of it the system adopted by some of these earlier writers. Two of the books of Sufyān al-Thaurī, however, which were related by various scholars, were works of a different type. About one of them Ibn al-Nadīm says that it is similar to *Hadīth* works.<sup>3</sup> But this also has been lost.

### THE MUWATṬĀ

The earliest work connected with our subject which has been received by us is the *Muwatṭā* of Imām Mālik which has been fully described and criticised by Goldziher.<sup>4</sup> He is of the opinion that the *Muwatṭā* is not a work on *Hadīth* in the

(1) TIS, vol. ii, part 2, p. 136.

(2) FN, *loc. cit.*

(3) FN, p. 225.

(4) MSt. vol. ii, pp. 213-26.



same sense in which the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and other later words are. "It is", says he, "a *corpus juris*, and not a *corpus traditionum*. Its object was not to sift the *Aḥādīth* current in the Muslim world and to collect them together, but to demonstrate the religious laws, rituals and practices which were in keeping with the *Sunnah* prevalent in Madīnah, and which were in agreement with the *Ijmā'* accepted by the Muslims of Madīnah, and to produce on the basis of the *Ijmā'* and the *Sunnah* a theoretical standard for doubtful cases".

In order to prove his theory, Goldziher has quoted the fact that Imām Mālik has included in his work a large number of *Fatwās* and customs in vogue in Madīnah, without trying to prove them by *Ḥadīth*; that even in quoting the *Aḥādīth* he has not given the *Isnād* in all cases, and that he has not made any mention of such *Aḥādīth* as are of purely historical character.

These facts certainly show that the *Muwatṭa* was not intended to serve as a collection of *Aḥādīth*. But it may be said with equal justice that it is not a book of *Fiqh* in the same sense in which later books on *Fiqh* are said to be works on the subject. It contains a very large number of *Ḥadīth al-aḥkām* (legal traditions). According to Zarqānī, as Goldziher has pointed out, there are in it 1720 *Aḥādīth*, of which 600 contain *Isnāds*, 222 are *mursal*, 613 are *mawqūf*, and 285 stop either at a *Ṣaḥābī* or at a *Tābi'ī* (i.e. are either *mawqūf* or *maqtū'*)<sup>1</sup>. According to al-Ghāfiqī, the total number of *Aḥādīth* in the twelve versions of the *Muwatṭa* is 666, out of which 97 differ in the different versions of the book, and the rest are common in all the various recensions.<sup>2</sup> The great difference between al-Zarqānī's and al-Ghāfiqī's estimates seems to be due to the latter's not taking into account the versions of the *Muwatṭa* by al-Shaybānī and others<sup>3</sup>. Originally, however, the number of *Aḥādīth* in the *Muwatṭa* is reported to have been between

(1) MSt. vol. ii, p. 213.

(2) BM, p. 25.

(3) viz. Yahyā al-Tamīmī, Abū Ḥudhayfa and Suwayd b. Sa'id.



4,000 and 10,000, which were reduced by the author himself to about 1,000.<sup>1</sup>

The *Muwatṭā* may be treated as a good collection of *Aḥādīth* in the sense of the legal traditions. Some Muslim authorities like 'Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr and 'Abd al-Ḥaq of Delhi include it instead of the *Sunan* of Ibn Māja in the six canonical collections. Of course the majority of them do not count it as one of the six books because almost all the important traditions contained in it are included in the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of Bukhārī and Muslim.

On the analogy of the *Muwatṭā*, however, we may reasonably assume that the other *Sunan* works compiled before or simultaneously with it also contained a fair proportion of the *Ḥādīth al-Aḥkām*, and might therefore be treated like the *Muwatṭā* as *Ḥādīth* works.

#### THE LEGAL AND HISTORICAL TRADITIONS

Since the earliest times the Muslims have made a distinction between the legal traditions (*Ḥādīth al-Aḥkām*) and the purely historical traditions (the *Maghāzī*). In the *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Sa'd some Companions are described as being well-versed in the *Fiqh* (Law) and others are stated to be authorities on the *Maghāzī* (the historical traditions). In the treatment of the legal traditions they had been careful and critical; whereas in relating the historical traditions they were rather free. Ṣuhayb, a Companion, used to say: "Come along, I will tell you the tales of our battles (*Maghāzī*), but I will not relate to you that the Prophet has said such and such things."<sup>2</sup> Sā'ib b. Yazīd heard Ṭalḥa relate the tales of the battle of Uhud, whereas he did not hear other Companions relate any *Ḥādīth* of the Prophet<sup>3</sup>. From these and other similar reports it appears that the *Maghāzī* served the early Muslims as topics for their general conversations. But with

(1) SMt. i, 8.

(2) TIS, vol. iii, part 1, p. 164.

(3) SB, k. *al-Jihād*, b. *man ḥaddatha b' mashāhidihī*, vol. ii, p. 97.



the legal traditions they had been careful and scrupulous, as we shall see in the next chapter.

The word *Fiqh* itself had been used sometimes in the sense of *Ḥadīth*. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, after relating a *Ḥadīth*, points out that here the word *Fiqh* is used in the sense of *Ḥadīth*.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, the Islamic law in its earliest period consisted of little else than the legal traditions (*Ḥadīth al-Aḥkām*). It is therefore that all such Companions as are reported to have related the largest number of *Aḥādīth* e.g. 'Ā'ishah, Ibn Mas'ūd, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās are described as *Faqīhs*.

The number of the legal traditions appears to be rather small. Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī has mentioned only 1029 of them in his *al-Aḥkām al-Ṣughra* which is devoted to the legal traditions only.<sup>2</sup> Ḥāfiz 'Abd al-Ghanī in his *'Umdat al-Aḥkām* has mentioned only 500 of them.<sup>3</sup> Ibn Ḥajar in his *Bulūgh al-Marām* has quoted about 1338 of them.<sup>4</sup> Ibn Taymiyah (Majd al-Dīn) in his *Muntaqa* has of course quoted a much larger number. But he has often treated the sayings and the doings of the Companions also as *Ḥadīth*, and sometimes he treats the various versions of the same *Ḥadīth* as independent ones.<sup>5</sup>

#### CLASSIFICATION OF BOOKS OF ḤADĪTH

Books of *Ḥadīth* have been classified into the following groups :—

1. *Ṣaḥīfas*.
2. *Ajzā'*.
3. *Rasā'il* or *Kutub*.
4. *Muṣannafs*.
5. *Musnads*.
6. *Mu'jams*.
7. *Jāmi's*.

(1) JBI, part ii, p. 27.

(2) See KZ, vol. i, pp. 174-75.

(3) KZ, vol. iv, 254 ff.

(4) *Ibid.* ii, 68.

(5) *Ibid.* vi, 167. This number is based on my own calculation.



8. *Sunans*.
9. *Mustadraks*.
10. *Mustakhrajs*.
11. *Arba'īniyāt*.

1. The *Ṣaḥīfas* are such collections of the sayings of the Prophet as were written down by some of his Companions during his life-time or by their followers in the next generation. Several of these *Ṣaḥīfas* have been mentioned by Goldziher according to whom some of them are also described as *Rasā'il* and as *Kutub*.<sup>1</sup> One of them which was collected by Abū Hurayra and taught and handed down by him to his student, Hammām b. Munabbih, has been edited by Dr. Ḥamīdullah.<sup>2</sup> But the most important of them is the *Ṣaḥīfa* which was collected by 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-Āṣ, who gave it the title of *al-Ṣādiqah*.<sup>3</sup>

2. The *Ajzā'* are such collections of the Traditions as have been handed down on the authority of one single individual—be he a Companion or of any generation after him. The term *Juz'* is also applied to such collections of *Aḥādīth* as have been compiled on a particular subject-matter—e.g. "Intention", the Vision of God, etc.<sup>4</sup>

3. The *Rasā'il* are such collections of *Aḥādīth* as deal with one particular topic out of eight topics into which the contents of the *Jāmi'* books of *Hadīth* may be generally classified.

These topics are :—

- i. Beliefs or Dogma.
- ii. Laws or *Aḥkām* which are also known as *Sunan* and include all the subjects of *Fiqh* from *Tahārat* or Purity to *Waṣāyā* or Exhortations.
- iii. *Ruqāq*, i.e. Piety, Asceticism, Mysticism.

(1) MSt, vol. ii, pp. 231-32.

(2) SHM.

(3) MSt, vol. ii, pp. 10-11.

(4) RFUH, p. 22.



- iv. Etiquette in eating, drinking, travelling, etc.
- v. *Tafsīr* or commentary on the Qur'ān.
- vi. *Tā'rikh* and *Siyar*, i.e. historical and biographical matters which include (a) Cosmology, Ancient History, etc. and (b) the life of the Prophet, of his Companions and Successors.
- vii. *Fitan*, i.e. Crises.
- viii. Appreciation (*Manāqib*) and denunciation (*Mathālib*) of persons, places, etc.

The *Rasā'il* are also called Books (*Kutub*). To this class belong many of the works of Ibn Ḥajar, al-Suyūṭī, and others.<sup>1</sup>

4. *Muṣannafs* are those large collections of *Aḥādīth* in which the traditions relating to most or all the various topics mentioned above are put together and arranged in various books or chapters, each dealing with a particular topic. To this class belong the *Muwaffā* of Imām Mālik, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim, etc.

5. The term *Musnad* (supported) was originally used for such traditions as were supported by a complete uninterrupted chain of authorities (*Isnād*) going back to a Companion who related it from the Prophet himself.<sup>2</sup> But later on the term came to be used in the general sense of a reliable and authoritative tradition. In this sense the term is also used for all reliable works in the *Hadīth* literature, and works like the *Sunan* of al-Dārimī and the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī are called *Musnads*. But technically it is used only for those collections of *Aḥādīth* in which they are arranged according to the names of the final authorities by whom they are related, irrespective of their subject-matter. Such are the *Musnads* of Abū Dā'ūd Tayālīsī (d. 204/819), Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 233/847), 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Abī Shayba (d. 235/849), 'Uthmān

(1) RFUH, pp. 19-20, 22-23.

(2) For the difference of opinion about the definition of the *musnad* *Hadīth* see TN, p. 66.



b. Abī Shayba (d. 237/851), Abū Khaythama (d. 234/844) and others.<sup>1</sup> He who collected *Aḥādīth* in the form of a *Musnad* is called a *Musnid* or a *Musnidi*.<sup>2</sup> The *Musnad* works themselves, however, differ in detail in the arrangement of the authorities who originally related them. In some of them they are arranged in the alphabetical order of their names. In some of them they are arranged according to their relative merit in the acceptance of Islam and in taking part in the early important events of the Prophet's mission. In some of them they are arranged according to the affinity of their tribe to the Prophet.<sup>3</sup>

There are, however, certain *Musnad* works which are divided into chapters devoted to various subjects, and in each chapter the *Aḥādīth* are arranged according to the original authorities, Companions, by whom they are related. This plan is followed by Abū Ya'la<sup>4</sup> (d. 276/889) and Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān in their *Musnad* works.<sup>5</sup> These works combine the characteristics of the *Musnad* and of the *Muṣannaf* works.

Some of the *Musnad*-compilers, however, tried to collect together all the available traditions reported by the various Companions.<sup>6</sup> The *Musnad* of Ibn al-Najjār is said to have contained the traditions related by all the Companions. The *Musnad* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal contains more than 30,000 traditions reported by about 700 Companions.<sup>7</sup> The *Musnad* of Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān is reported by Ḥājī Khalīfah on the authority of Ibn Ḥazm to have contained traditions related by 1300 Companions.<sup>8</sup> There are, however, many *Musnad* works which are devoted to traditions related either by a special group of Companions or by one single Companion only.

(1) A large number of *Musnad* works are mentioned by Ḥājī Khalīfah, KZ, vol. v, pp. 532-43.

(2) MSt. vol. ii, p. 227.

(3) RFUH, p. 21.

(4) BM, p. 37.

(5) KZ, vol. v, p. 534.

(6) MSt. vol. ii, p. 229.

(7) TK, vol. i, p. 202.

(8) KZ, vol. v, p. 534.



6. The term *Mu'jam* is generally applied to such works on various subjects as are arranged in alphabetical order. The geographical and the biographical dictionaries of Yāqūt are called *Mu'jam al-Buldān* and *Mu'jam al-Udabā*, because they are arranged alphabetically. Such *Musnad* collections of *Aḥādīth* as are arranged under the names of the Companions in their alphabetical order are also known as *Mu'jam al-Ṣaḥāba*. But according to the authorities on the science of Tradition, the term is used technically for such collections of *Aḥādīth* only as are arranged not according to the Companions who reported them, but according to the Traditionists from whom the compiler himself received them. The names of such Traditionists (*Shuyūkh*) are arranged alphabetically,<sup>1</sup> and all the traditions received from each *Shaykh* are then collected together irrespective of their contents and subject-matter. To this class belong two of the collections of al-Ṭabarānī (260/870-360/970) and the collections of Ibrāhīm b. Ismā'il (d. 371/981) and Ibn al-Qānī (d. 350/960).<sup>2</sup> The largest collection by al-Ṭabarānī is in reality a *Musnad* work, not a *Mu'jam* work; for it is a *Mu'jam al-Ṣaḥāba*, not a *Mu'jam al-Shuyūkh*.

7. *Jāmi'* are those collections of *Aḥādīth* which contain traditions relating to all the various subject-matters mentioned under the *Rasā'il*. Thus, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī as well as the book of Tirmidhī is called *Jāmi'*. But the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim is not described as *Jāmi'*, because (unlike Bukhārī) it does not contain traditions relating to all the chapters of the *Qur'ān*.

8. *Sunan* are such collections of the traditions as contain *Aḥādīth al-aḥkām* (legal traditions) only, and leave out those traditions which relate to historical and other matters. Thus the collections of traditions made by Abū Dā'ūd, Nasā'ī and many other traditionists are known as *Sunan* works.

(1) Should they be arranged in the chronological order, the work would be called *Mashikhat*. See OPC, vol. v, part 2, p. 41 fn.

(2) BM, pp. 56, 95.



9. *Mustadraks* are such collections of *Aḥādīth* in which the compiler, having accepted the conditions laid down by any previous compiler, collects together such other traditions as fulfil those conditions and were missed by the previous compiler. To this class belongs the *Mustadrak* of al-Ḥākim who collected together such *Aḥādīth* as fulfilled the conditions laid down by al-Bukhārī and Muslim and were not included by them in their *Ṣaḥīḥs*.

10. *Mustakhraj* are those collections of *Aḥādīth* in which a later compiler of them collects together fresh *Isnāds* for such traditions as were collected by a previous compiler on the basis of different chains of *Isnād*. To this class belongs the *Mustakhraj* of Abū Nu'aym Iṣfahānī on the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and of Muslim. In this book Abū Nu'aym has given fresh chains of *Isnād* for some of the traditions which were already included by Bukhārī and Muslim in their *Ṣaḥīḥs* with different *Isnāds*.

11. The *Arba'īniyāt*, as the name shows, are the collections of forty *Aḥādīth* relating to one or more subjects which may have appeared to be of special interest to the compiler. An example of this class is the *Arba'īn* of al-Nawāwī.

Of all these eleven classes of the collections of *Aḥādīth*, the *Ṣaḥīfas*, as their description shows, were the earliest in origin. The *Mu'jams*, the *Mustadraks*, the *Mustakhrajs* and the *Arba'īniyāt* must have been the latest. The *Ajzā'* and the *Rasā'il* in their technical sense described above also must have been later in origin and development than the *Muṣannaf* and the *Musnad* works. The *Sunan* and the *Jāmi'* being only subdivisions of the *Muṣannaf* works, the problem of the priority of origin of the remaining classes of the *Ḥadīth* works rests between the *Muṣannafs* and the *Musnads* which is difficult to decide. Goldziher is of the opinion that the *Musnads* are earlier in origin than the *Muṣannafs* which originated under the influence of the legal system of the *Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth*.<sup>1</sup> But as the collection of *Aḥādīth* was greatly due to their legal

(1) MSt. vol. ii, pp. 232ff.



importance, it is not unlikely that some of the very early collections of them were arranged according to their subject-matter connected with the Islamic legal, ritual or religious problems, as is also suggested by the title *Kitāb al-Sunan* given to them.

The *Hadīth* thus collected by the continuous, hard and honest work of many generations of the Muslims of various countries belonging to different schools of thought, has been a subject of study of the Muslim scholars and a source of inspiration to the Muslim world upto the present time. The *Hadīth* together with the *Qur'ān* served the Muslims as the main basis of their social structure. On this twofold basis originated and developed the various Islamic sciences. To these two turns an average Muslim for inspiration and guidance. On them can be properly based the reconstruction of the Islamic thought according to the requirements of modern times. The efforts of many modern reformers have so far failed because they ignored the *Qur'ān* and the *Hadīth*, just as some Mediaeval Islamic sects could not flourish because they had ignored their importance.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE ḤADĪTH AND THE COMPANIONS (*Ṣaḥāba*)

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TERM ṢAḤĀBĪ

The term *al-Ṣaḥāba* or *al-Aṣḥāb* (singular : *al-Ṣaḥābī* and *al-Ṣaḥīb*, a Companion) is used by the Muslims as a title of great honour for such Muslims as had enjoyed the privilege of having lived in the company of the Prophet. On the qualifications necessary for being a *Ṣaḥābī* the Muslim scholars differ. Some of them are of the opinion that every Muslim who had seen Muḥammad was a *Ṣaḥābī*. Some hold that long association with Muḥammad is necessary for being a *Ṣaḥābī*.<sup>1</sup> The majority of them, however, hold that every grown up Muslim who associated with Muḥammad for some time may be called a *Ṣaḥābī*. The near relatives of Muḥammad, his bosom friends, his attendants, as well as such ordinary Muslims as saw him even once are generally included among the *Ṣaḥāba*.

It is the Companions who reported *Aḥādīth* from Muḥammad. They are the authorities by whom—through the Followers (*al-Tābiʿūn*), their students and associates—are handed down the Islamic *Aḥādīth*. Upon their reliability, authenticity and trustworthiness rests to a large extent the trustworthiness of the great mass of *Aḥādīth* collected by the Muslim scholars of the later generations.

#### THE NUMBER OF THE COMPANIONS

The exact number of the Companions cannot be determined. Only once during the early history of Islam a census was taken, when they were found to be 1,525.<sup>2</sup> This census must have been taken about the time of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiya when the danger to the Muslims was great, and

(1) TA, p. 18; FM, pp. 367-73; MIS, pp. 118-19.

(2) ATb. vol. i, p. 1530; SB, k. *al-Jihād*, b. *kitāb al-Imām*, vol. ii p. 123.



an estimate of their actual strength was necessary. Since then the number of the Muslims went up by leaps and bounds, and before the death of Muḥammad almost the whole of the Arabian penin-sula had accepted Islam.

A large number of these Muslims of the time of Muḥammad had seen him and listened to his orations and sayings. Forty thousands of them were with him when he performed the Farewell Pilgrimage at Mecca.<sup>1</sup> The number of all those who ever saw or heard him has been estimated by Abū Zarrāʾ al-Rāzī to be above 100,000.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE COMPANIONS WHO RELATED TRADITIONS

All the Companions did not relate the *Hadīth* of their master. The *Musnad* of Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān which is said to be the largest collection of *Aḥādīth* is stated to contain traditions related by 1300 Companions only.<sup>3</sup> Ibn al-Jauzī, who has given a list of all the Companions who related traditions, has mentioned the names of about 1060 of them together with the number of the traditions related by each.<sup>4</sup> Five hundred of them are said to have related 1 tradition each. One hundred and thirty two are stated to have handed down 2 traditions each. Eighty are described to have related 3 traditions each. Fifty-two are mentioned to be responsible for 4 traditions each; thirty-two for 5 each; twenty-six for 6 each; twenty-seven for 7 each; eighteen for 8 each, and eleven for 9 traditions each. Sixty of the Companions are credited with having related 10-20 traditions each. Of the rest each is said to have related 20 or more traditions. Here is the table showing the names of these Companions and the number of the traditions related by them :—

No.	Name of the Companion	Number of <i>Aḥādīth</i>
1	Abū Shurayḥ al-Kaʿbī	20
2	ʿAbd Allāh b. Jarrād	20

(1) MIS, p. 121.

(2) ITS, vol. i, p. 3.

(3) KZ, vol. v, p. 534.

(4) TFA, pp. 184-97.



No.	Name of the Companion	Number of <i>Aḥādīth</i>
3	Muswir b. Makhrama <sup>1</sup>	20
4	‘Amr b. Umayya al-Ḍamrī	20
5	‘Amr b. Umayya (another)	20
6	Ṣafawān b. ‘Assāl	20
7	Sa‘d b. ‘Ubāda	21
8	al-Rabī‘	21
9	al-Sā‘ib	22
10	Qurra	22
11	‘Umayr b. Rabī‘ā	22
12	Umm Qays	24
13	Laqīṭ b. ‘Āmir	24
14	al-Sharīd <sup>2</sup>	24
15	Rifā‘a b. Rāfi‘	24
16	‘Abd Allāh b. Unays	24
17	Aus b. Aus	24
18	al-Faḍl b. ‘Abbās	24
19	Abū Wāqid al-Laythī	24
20	Abū Ṭalḥa al-Anṣārī	25
21	‘Abd Allāh b. Salām	25
22	Sahl b. Abī Ḥathma <sup>3</sup> (Hay thama ?)	25
23	Abū al-Mulayḥ al-Hudhalī <sup>4</sup>	25
24	‘Abd Allāh b. Ja‘far	25
25	Ya‘la b. Murra	26
26	Abū Ḥumayd al-Sā‘idī	26
27	Abū Mālīk al-Ash‘arī <sup>5</sup>	27
28	‘Abd Allāh b. Buḥayna <sup>6</sup>	27
29	Abū Usayd al-Sā‘idī <sup>7</sup>	28
30	‘Utba b. ‘Abd	28
31	Ya‘la b. Umayya	28
32	‘Uthmān b. Abī al-‘Āṣ	29

(1) IMA, vol. i, No. 1109.

(2) TT, vol. iv, No. 573.

(3) *Ibid.* No. 425.(4) *Ibid.* vol. xii, No. 1124.

(5) IMA, vol. ii,

(6) TT, vol. v, No. 653.

(7) IMA, vol. ii, No. 2806.



No.	Name of the Companion	Number of <i>Aḥādīth</i>
33	Umm al-Faḍl bint al-Ḥārith	30
34	Ṣuhayb	30
35	‘Iyāḍ b. Ḥimār (Hammād?)	30
36	Mu‘ādh b. Anas	30
37	‘Irbāḍ b. Sāriya <sup>1</sup>	31
38	Khubāb b. al-Aratt <sup>2</sup>	32
39	‘Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr	33
40	Fāṭima bint Qays	34
41	Ma‘qil b. Yassār <sup>3</sup>	34
42	al-‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib	35
43	‘Amr b. ‘Abasa <sup>4</sup>	38
44	Khuzayma b. Thābit <sup>5</sup>	38
45	Ṭalḥa b. ‘Abd Allāh	38
46	al-Zubayr b. al-‘Awwām <sup>6</sup>	38
47	‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ	39
48	Umm ‘Atīya	40
49	Abū Tha‘laba al-Khushanī <sup>7</sup>	40
50	Ḥakīm b. Ḥizām <sup>8</sup>	40
51	Sahl b. Ḥunayf <sup>9</sup>	40
52	Mu‘āwiya b. Ḥayda! <sup>10</sup>	42
53	al-Miqdād	42
54	‘Abd Allāh b. Mughfil <sup>11</sup>	53
55	Jundab b. ‘Abd Allāh	43
56	Bilāl (the <i>Mu‘wadhdhin</i> )	44
57	Abu Juḥayfa	45
58	Umm Hānī	46

(1) TT, vol. vii, No. 340.

(2) *Ibid.* vol. iii, No. 254.

(3) IMA, vol. i, No. 1095.

(4) *Ibid.* vol. ii, No. 1896.

(5) TT, vol. iii, No. 267.

(6) *Ibid.* No. 592.

(7) IMA, vol. ii, No. 2850.

(8) TT, vol. ii, No. 775.

(9) *Ibid.* vol. iv, No. 428.

(10) IMA, vol. i, No. 1081.

(11) TT, vol. vi, No. 74.



No.	Name of the Companion	Number of <i>Aḥādīth</i>
59	Abū Barza <sup>1</sup>	46
60	Ka'b b. 'Ujra <sup>2</sup>	47
61	al-Miqdām	47
62	'Abd Allāh b. Zayd	48
63	Sa'id b. Zayd b. 'Amr	48
64	'Abd Allāh b. Bishr	50
65	Shaddād b. Aus	50
66	Asmā' bint Abī Bakr	58
67	Asmā' bint 'Umayy	60
68	Ḥaṣṣa, wife of Muḥammad	60
69	Jubayr b. Muṭ'im	60
70	Salmān al-Fārisī	60
71	'Amr b. 'Auf	62
72	'Ammār b. Yāsir	62
73	'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Auf	65
74	Umm Ḥabība, wife of Muḥammad	65
75	'Adī b. Ḥātim	66
76	Abū Rāfi'	68
77	Zayd b. Arqam	70
78	Wā'il b. Ḥujr <sup>3</sup>	71
79	Maymūna	76
80	Salma b. al-Akwa'	77
81	Rāfi' b. Khudayj <sup>4</sup>	78
82	Zayd b. Khālīd	81
83	Zayd b. Thābit	92
84	'Abd Allāh b. Abī Aufa	95
85	Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh <sup>5</sup>	100
86	Abū Mas'ūd al-Anṣārī	102
87	Nu'man b. Bashīr	144
88	Samura b. Jundab <sup>6</sup>	123

(1) IMA, vol. i, No. 1081.

(2) TT, vol. vi, No. 74.

(3) IMA, vol. ii, No. 2844.

(4) TT, vol. viii, No. 788.

(5) TT, vol. ii, No. 115.

(6) IMA, vol. ii, No. 2434.



No.	Name of the Companion	Number of <i>Aḥādīth</i>
89	Thaubān	128
90	Usāma b. Zayd	128
91	Abū Bakra Nufay' b. al-Ḥārith	132
92	Mughīra b. Shu'ba	136
93	Abū Bakr (the first Caliph)	142
94	Jābir b. Samura	146
95	Uthmān (the third Caliph)	146
96	Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī	155
97	Mu'ādh b. Jabal	157
98	Mu'āwiyah (the first Umayyad caliph)	163
99	Ubayy b. Ka'b	164
100	Burayda b. al-Ḥaṣīb. <sup>1</sup>	167
101	Abū Qatāda	170
102	Abū Dardā'	179
103	'Imrān b. Ḥaṣīn <sup>2</sup>	180
104	'Ubāda b. al-Ṣāmit	181
105	Sahl b. Sa'd	188
106	Ma'd b. Yamān	225
107	Abū Umāma al-Bāhili <sup>3</sup>	250
108	Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ	271
109	Abū Dhar al-Ghifārī	281
110	al-Barā' b. 'Azīb	305
111	Abū Mūsa al-Ash'ari	360
112	Umm Salma, wife of Muḥamad	378
113	'Alī (the fourth Caliph)	536
114	'Umar (the second Caliph)	537
115	'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ	700
116	'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd	848
117	Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī	1170
118	Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh	1540
119	'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās	1660
120	'Ā'ishah, wife of Muḥammad	2210
121	Anas b. Mālik	2286

(1) TT, vol. i, No. 797.

(2) *Ibid.* vol. viii, No. 219.

(3) IMA, vol. ii, No. 2799.



No.	Name of the Companion	Number of <i>Aḥādith</i>
122	‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb	2630
123	Abū Hurayra <sup>1</sup>	5374

It is evident from what has been said that the great mass of the traditions received by us are related by less than three hundred Companions. The *Muwattā* of Imām Malik contains the traditions related by 98 Companions only.<sup>2</sup> The *Musnad* of Abū Dā‘ūd Ṭayālīsī contains those related by 281 of them. The *Musnad* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal contains those related by about 700 Companions.<sup>3</sup> The two *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim contain those related by 208 and 213 Companions respectively, of whom 149 are common between the two great works.<sup>4</sup>

Of these 300 Companions referred to above, only 55 have related 100 or more traditions. Of these again, only 11 are responsible for more than 500 traditions each. Six or seven of the latter, each of whom has reported more than 1000 traditions, are known as *al-Mukaththirūn*, i.e. the reporters of many traditions.<sup>5</sup>

All these eleven Companions enjoyed the privilege of long association with Muḥammad, had great thirst for his *Ḥadīth* (during his life-time), and could speak with authority about what he had said or done. They lived for a long time after his death when the mass of the traditions which they had learnt was handed down to the succeeding generations of the Muslims, whereas the knowledge gathered by the Companions who were either killed in the early battles or died shortly after the death of Muḥammad could not spread among the Muslims, and was lost for good. The reporters of the largest number of *Aḥādith* include :—

(1) TFA, pp. 184-86.

(2) SMt, i, 8f.

(3) TK, i, 202.

(4) TFA, pp. 197-205.

(5) FM, p. 379; TA, p. 352.



1. Abū Hurayra, 'Abd Allāh or 'Abd al-Raḥmān.<sup>1</sup> He stands at the top of the reporters of *Hadīth* among the Companions, and was recognised by Muḥammad himself as the most anxious Muslim for the knowledge of *Hadīth*. He belonged to the tribe of Daus, an off-shoot of the gerat clan of Azd.<sup>2</sup> He came to Madīnah in the 7th year of the Hijra, and being told that Muḥammad was at Khaybar, went there and accepted Islam. Since then till Muḥammad's death, he remained constantly in his company, attending him and learning his *Hadīth* during the day at the sacrifice of all worldly pursuits and pleasures and remembering them by heart in the night.<sup>3</sup> After the death of the Prophet, he worked as a governor of al-Baḥrayn for some time during the caliphate of 'Umar, and acted as the governor of Madīnah under the early Umayyad caliphs.<sup>4</sup> He died in 59/678.

When Muḥammad was no more, and the reports of his sayings and doings were sought in order to meet the daily rising cases, Abū Hurayra (who instructed more than 800 students in the subject) profusely poured out the store of knowledge he had so laboriously accumulated. Sometimes he was taken to task for reporting such traditions as were never heard by any other Companion. But he retorted that he had learnt what the *Anṣār* (Helpers) had missed in attending to their lands and properties, and what the *Muhājirūn* (Refugees) had failed to learn because of their business engagements, and that he had remembered what they had forgotten under the stress of their multifarious activities.<sup>5</sup> Once when he was taken to task by 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar for relating a particular *Hadīth*, he took him to 'Ā'ishah who bore witness to the truth of what he had related.<sup>6</sup> His knowledge and memory were also tested by Marwān who, having written down some tradi-

(1) TIS, vol. iv, part 2, pp. 54ff.

(2) GT, No. 10.

(3) TIS, vol. iv, part 2, p. 54.

(4) *Ibid.* p. 60.

(5) *Ibid.* p. 56.

(6) *Ibid.* p. 58.



tions related by him, wanted him after a year to relate the same, and found them to be exactly identical with his earlier narration.<sup>1</sup>

He is believed by the Muslims to have been too pious and conscientious a Muslim to put into the mouth of Muḥammad any words which had not actually fallen from his lips, or to ascribe to him anything that he had not done. But he does not appear to have been endowed by nature with a power of minute observation or a critical faculty strong enough to take cognizance of all the circumstances in which the Prophet uttered certain words or acted in a particular way. Many other Companions, therefore, had to explain some of the *Aḥādīth* reported by him, and to reject some of them. 'Ā'ishah, having come to know that Abū Hurayra related that Muḥammad had said that a woman was put in hellfire because she kept a cat and did not feed it, pointed out to him that the woman was an unbeliever.<sup>2</sup> When she was told that Abū Hurayra related that Muḥammad had said that three things are ominous—namely, a house, a horse and a woman—she said that Abū Hurayra came in while the Prophet was saying: "May God destroy the Jews. They say that ill-luck is in three things: in a house, in a woman and in a horse". Abū Hurayra, said 'Ā'ishah, heard the last part of the *Hadīth*, and missed the first portion of it.<sup>3</sup> 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās having come to know that Abū Hurayra related that Muḥammad had said: *al-waḍū' min mā massat ai-nār w'lau min thaur aqīṭ*, took him to task for relating such a *Hadīth*.<sup>4</sup>

Considering the interest of Abū Hurayra in cultural attainments in general, his devotion to the Prophet and to his *Aḥādīth* in particular, and the test applied to his memory and his narration by his own contemporaries during his life-time, it appears to be very unlikely that he himself fabricated any

(1) SHM, pp. 38-39.

(2) MAT, No. 1400.

(3) MAT, No. 1537.

(4) 'Ablution (necessitated by) contact with fire even though it should be a piece of cheese.' JT, i, p. 12.



*Hadīth*.<sup>1</sup> But it is possible that at a later period may have been attributed to him some *Aḥādīth* for the narration of which he was not responsible. The fact that he narrated a very large number of traditions (larger than any other Companion is said to have narrated) was explained by himself to his own contemporaries. It is therefore clear that the remark that Abū Hurayra was "a pious humbug" is unwarranted.<sup>2</sup>

2. Abū 'Abdal-Raḥmān 'Abd Allāh is the second largest reporter of *Aḥādīth*. He was the son of 'Umar, the second caliph. He had accepted Islam simultaneously with his father, and migrated to Madīnah with him.<sup>3</sup> He took part in many battles during the life-time of Muḥammad and in the wars in Mesopotamia, Persia and Egypt, but kept strict neutrality during the civil wars among the Muslims which followed the assassination of 'Uthmān. In spite of the great esteem and honour in which he was held by all the Muslims and notwithstanding the suggestion repeatedly made to him to stand up for the caliphate (which he obstinately refused), he kept himself entirely aloof from party strife, and throughout these years led an unselfish, pious life. He set an example of an ideal citizen just as his father had set an example of the ideal ruler. He died at Mecca in the year 74/692 at the age of 87.

His long association with Muḥammad, his blood relationship with Ḥafṣa (wife of Muḥammad) and with some other Companions of the Prophet, offered him a splendid opportunity to learn *Hadīth*, and his long peaceful life gave him time and leisure to teach and spread *Aḥādīth* among the Muslims who anxiously sought for them.

He was extremely careful in relating *Aḥādīth* to others. al-Sha 'bī says that he did not hear a single *Hadīth* from him for one whole year.<sup>4</sup> When he related *Aḥādīth*, his eyes were

(1) SHM, pp. 36-40.

(2) LL, iii, pp. LXXXIII-LXXXV.

(3) TIS, vo. iv, part 2, pp. 105-137.

(4) TIS, vo. iv, part 1, pp. 106-25.



full of tears.<sup>1</sup> His activities in the service of Islam, his pious life, his straightforward and unselfish career, and his careful and sympathetic treatment of the traditions, put a seal of truth on such of them as are related by him.

3. Abū Ḥamza Anas b. Mālik. At the age of ten years, Anas was presented by his mother, Umm Sulaym, to Muḥammad who had migrated to Madīnah. Since then upto the time of Muḥammad's death, he had been his favourite attendant.<sup>2</sup> After Muḥammad's death, he was appointed by Abū Bakr (at the advice of 'Umar) as a tax-collector at al-Bahrayn. About the later part of his life he settled down at Basra, where he died in the year 93/711 when he was more than one hundred years old.<sup>3</sup>

During the ten years he spent in the service of Muḥammad he had learnt a large number of his *Aḥādīth*, of which he also learnt a good deal from Abū Bakr, 'Umar and many other Companions of the Prophet.<sup>4</sup> The knowledge of *Hadīth* gathered by him was so extensive that his death was considered as a death-blow to half of the entire mass of traditions.<sup>5</sup>

He is accepted by Muslim traditions as one of the most reliable narrators of *Hadīth*. There is no reason to suspect the genuineness of such traditions as may be proved to have been narrated by him.

4. 'Ā'ishah, the daughter of Abū Bakr and the favourite wife of Muḥammad, occupies the fourth place among the reporters of the largest number of *Aḥādīth*. She enjoyed the constant company of Muḥammad as his favourite wife for about eight and a half years.<sup>6</sup> She died in the year 57/676 when she was 65 years old.

(1) TIS, vol. iv, part 1, p. 124.

(2) TdH, vol. i, p. 38.

(3) TA, p. 166.

(4) TdH, vol. i, p. 38.

(5) TA, p. 167.

(6) TdH, vol. i, p. 24.



She was endowed by nature with a retentive memory and a keen critical faculty. She remembered a large number of pre-Islamic Arabic poems, and was taken during her life-time as an authority on Medicine and on Islamic Law.<sup>1</sup> As regards *Aḥādīth*, she had not only learnt a large number of them in the company of her husband, but also had critical appreciation of them. She corrected the mistakes of many Companions which they committed in understanding and relating the words of Muḥammad. When for instance she was told that Ibn 'Umar had related Muḥammad to have said that the dead are punished in their graves on account of the lamentations of their relatives, she pointed out that Muḥammad had said that while the dead person was punished in his grave for his own faults and sins, his relatives wept for him. It was, she added, like another instance in which Ibn 'Umar had related the Prophet of God to have said of the dead bodies of the unbelievers who were killed in the battle of Badr: "Verily they hear what I say". What, according to 'Ā'ishah, the Prophet had in fact said was: "Certainly they now know that what I used to say is true". In order to prove her contention 'Ā'ishah quoted the verse of the Qur'ān which says that one could not make the dead hear, nor could one's voice reach those who are in the graves.<sup>2</sup>

Numerous instances of the criticism of *Aḥādīth* by 'Ā'ishah which show how keen her critical faculty was, are collected by a distinguished Indian scholar, Saiyid Sulaymān Nadwī, in his *Sīrat-i-'Ā'ishah* the perusal of which is sure to be interesting and profitable to those who are interested in her charming personality and in the origin of the Islamic sciences.

It was on account of her extensive knowledge of *Ḥadīth* and Islamic Law that even the important Companions sought her advice on legal problems, and a large number of them (and of other Muslims) sought for the knowledge of *Ḥadīth* from her. A long list of those who related *Aḥādīth* on her

(1) TdH, vol. i. p. 24.

(2) SB, k. *Maghāzī*, "Badr", vol. iii, p. 5.



authority is given by 'Asqalānī in his *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*.<sup>1</sup>

5. Abū al-'Abbās 'Abd Allāh b. al-'Abbās was born three years before the migration of Muḥammad to Madīnah,<sup>2</sup> and was 13 years of age at the time of his death. He was loved very much by Muḥammad, which is apparent from the *Aḥādīth* about him (in all the Ḥadīth collections). He died in 68/687 at the age of 71.<sup>3</sup>

He seems to have learnt a few *Aḥādīth* from Muḥammad himself. 'Asqalānī (quoting Yahya b. al Qaṭṭān) refers to the assertion that Ibn 'Abbās related only 10 or 4 traditions from Muḥammad himself, and adds that this estimate is not correct, because in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al Bukhārī and Muslim alone are found more than ten of the traditions reported by Ibn 'Abbās directly from Muḥammad.<sup>4</sup> There is, however, no doubt that the number of the *Aḥādīth* reported by him directly from Muḥammad is very small in comparison with what he has related from him through other Companions. These *Aḥādīth* he had learnt from them by serious, hard labour. He says: "If I expected to learn any *Ḥadīth* from a Companion, I went to his door and waited there—in spite of the wind bringing dust on me—till he came out and said: 'Cousin of the Prophet, what brought you here? Why did you not send for me'? I used to reply that it was only proper that I should go to him. Then I learnt the *Ḥadīth* from him".<sup>5</sup>

Ibn 'Abbās was endowed by nature with keen intellectual powers and critical acumen. He was devoted to the study of the *Ḥadīth* and the Qur'ān, and was loved on account of his intellectual ability by all the first four caliphs, and was respected by all his contemporaries. He had collected a large

(1) Vol. xii, No. 2841.

(2) UGh, vol. iii, p. 193.

(3) *Ibid.* p. 195.

(4) TT, vol. v, No. 474.

(5) TIS, vol. ii, part 2, p. 121.

Cf. JBI, i. pp. 85-86.



number of traditions, written them down in the form of books, and delivered lectures on them to his own disciples. His *Tafsīr* of the Qur'ān which was handed down by his student, Mujāhid, is well known and has been referred to by later commentators.<sup>1</sup>

Some aspects of his political activity have been criticised severely.<sup>2</sup> But his fame rests on his intellectual attainments, not on his political activity. The reliability of the *Aḥādīth*, however, which may be proved to have been narrated by him is unquestionable. Of course, much of what has been attributed to him must have been forged by later narrators.

6. Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh was one of the early Madinite converts to Islam who attended the second Council of Muhammad with the people of Madīnah at Mecca.<sup>3</sup> He took part in 19 battles in the company of Muḥammad.<sup>4</sup> He died in Madīnah about the year 74/693 at the age of 94.

He learnt the *Hadīth* of Muḥammad not only from him, but also from many of his important Companions—e.g. Abū Bakr, 'Umar and others. He also learnt it from the Followers (*al-Tābi'ūn*) like Umm Kulthūm, the daughter of Abū Bakr. He used to teach *Hadīth* regularly in the mosque at Madīnah.<sup>5</sup>

7. Abū Sa'īd Sa'd. b. Mālīk al-Khudrī was one of the early Madinite converts to Islam and wanted to take part in the battle of Uhud; but as he was too young, he could not then be allowed to take up arms. His father Mālīk was killed in this battle, and he himself took part in 12 of the battles fought during the life-time of Muḥammad. He died at Madīnah in 64/683.<sup>6</sup>

(1) EIsn, " 'Abd Allāh b. al-'Abbās", I. Veccia Vaglieri.

(2) EIsn, " 'Abd Allāh b. al-'Abbās", F. Buhl.

(3) TdH, vol. i, p. 37.

(4) TA, p. 185.

(5) TT, vol. ii, No. 67.

(6) TA, p. 723.



He was one of the *Aṣḥāb al-ṣuffa*—i.e. a band of poor Companions who worked in day-time for their livelihood, and devoted the night to the reading of the Qur'ān and the learning of the *Sunnah* from their teachers. They were known as *al-Qurrā'*, and were generally sent out of Madīnah in order to instruct people in Islamic rituals wherever such instruction was needed.

al-Khudrī learnt the *Hadīth* from Muhammad as well as from his important Companions like Abū Bakr, 'Umar, Zayd b. Thābit, etc. He was considered to be the best jurist among the young Companions of Muḥammad.<sup>1</sup>

8-11. 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd,<sup>2</sup> 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib were early converts to Islam. They had suffered for its cause, had enjoyed the company of Muḥammad for a long time, and lived after him long enough to transmit the *Hadīth* which they had learnt from him. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ, in spite of being alive during the period of the civil war among the Muslims, kept himself (like 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb) above party strife. Of course, he was present at the battle of Ṣiffīn between 'Alī and Mu'āwīyah on account of the persistence of his father. But he took no active part in it. Even for his presence at the battle he was very regretful in his later life.<sup>3</sup> His interest in *Hadīth* was great. He wrote down all the traditions which he learnt from Muḥammad, and collected one thousand of them in a *Ṣaḥīfa* which he called *al-Ṣādiqa*.<sup>4</sup> When he lived at Mecca, the seekers for *Hadīth* collected round him in a large number. But as he lived mostly either in Egypt or at al-Ṭā'if (and not at Madīnah which had been the centre of the learning of *Hadīth*), and since he was more occupied with prayers than with teaching *Hadīth*, the later

(1) TT, vol. iii, No. 894.

(2) See "Ibn Mas'ūd" in EIS.

(3) UGh, vol. iii, pp. 233-35.

(4) *Ibid.*



generations of Muslims received fewer traditions from him than from Abū Hurayra, 'Ā'ishah and others.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the Companions, however, who have reported *Aḥādīth* had been very careful in reporting the words of their master, as well as in accepting them from those who reported them. Abū Bakr, during his caliphate, sought for *Aḥādīth*, but did not accept the words of those who reported them without a witness.<sup>2</sup> He also asked Muslims not to relate traditions which might cause discord among them.<sup>3</sup> 'Umar, the second caliph, carefully followed the example set by his predecessor. Mughīra,<sup>4</sup> Abū Mūsā,<sup>5</sup> 'Amr b. Umayya<sup>6</sup> and Ubayy b. Ka'b<sup>7</sup> were all compelled by him to produce witnesses for the traditions they had related. He is stated to have imprisoned 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd, Abū Dardā' and Abū Mas'ūd al-Anṣārī because they related too many traditions.<sup>8</sup> Uthmān, his successor, in spite of being well-versed in traditions had been scrupulous in relating them.<sup>9</sup> 'Alī, the fourth caliph, did not accept any tradition unless the reporter declared it on oath.<sup>10</sup> 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd had been so cautious in relating traditions that when he related one he perspired and felt uneasy, and at once added that the Prophet of God had either said this or something like it.<sup>11</sup> Zubayr did not like to relate traditions, because he had heard Muḥammad say that he who attributed anything to him falsely would make his seat in hell-fire.<sup>12</sup> Sa'd b.

(1) FM, p. 379.

(2) SAD, *k. al-Farā' id, b. al-Jaddah*, vol. ii, p. 45.

(3) TdH, vol. i, p. 3.

(4) SAD, "Diyat al-Janīn", vol. ii, p. 280.

(5) SB, vol. iv, p. 58.

(6) MAT, No. 1364.

(7) TIS, vol. iv, part 1, pp. 13-14.

(8) TdH, vol. i, p. 7.

(9) TIS, vol. iii, part 1, p. 39.

(10) SAD, vol. i, p. 220.

(11) TIS, vol. iii, part 1, p. 210.

(12) TIS, vol. iii, part 1, p. 110.



Abī Waqqāṣ feared that people might add to what he related.<sup>1</sup> Abū Dardā' after relating a *Ḥadīth* added that if Muḥammad did not say this, he said something like it. This was the practice of Anas b. Mālik also. 'Alī used to say that he preferred the heavens coming down upon him to attributing a false *Ḥadīth* to Muḥammad.<sup>2</sup>

The fear of committing mistakes in relating the words of Muḥammad had been so great with his Companions that many of them did not relate any *Ḥadīth* unnecessarily. 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd related only two or three *Aḥādīth* in a month.<sup>3</sup> Sā'ib b. Yazīd travelled with Sa'd b. Mālik from Madīnah to Mecca and did not hear him relate a single *Ḥadīth*.<sup>4</sup> al-Sha'bī lived in the company of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar for one whole year and never heard him relate a single *Ḥadīth*.<sup>5</sup> Sā'ib b. Yazīd reports that he had been in the company of 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Auf, Ṭalḥa b. 'Ubayd Allāh and Sa'd, and did not hear any of them relate a *Ḥadīth*—except that Ṭalḥa related the *Ḥadīth* of the battle of Uḥud.<sup>6</sup> Ṣuhayb was always ready to relate the historical traditions (*maghāzī*), but otherwise he did not dare to report the words of Muḥammad freely.<sup>7</sup>

#### THE PROBLEM OF THE PROHIBITION AND PERMISSIBILITY OF KITĀBAT (of Ḥadīth)<sup>8</sup>

Some of the Companions, however, who knew the art of writing had written down the *Ḥadīth* during the life-time of Muḥammad himself. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ secured his permission to write down his *Ḥadīth*. Consequently, he

(1) & (2) TIS, vol. iii, pt. 1 p. 102.

(3) JBI, part 1, pp. 78-79.

(4) SD, p. 46.

(5) *Ibid.*

(6) SIM, p. 4.

(7) TIS, vol. iii, part 1, p. 161; SB, vol. ii, 97.

(8) A detailed consideration of both these aspects of the problem, and copious data on them, will be found in SD, JBI, pp. 63-77, TI, and SHM (intro.). The contents of TI have been summarized by A. Sprenger in one of his articles (see JASB, vol. xxv, pp. 312-18, etc.



wrote whatever he heard from the Prophet,<sup>1</sup> and collected a thousand of his sayings in a *Ṣaḥīfa* which he called *al-Ṣādiqa*.<sup>2</sup> It was seen with him by al-Mujāhid, and later on it came into the possession of 'Amr b. Shu'ayb,<sup>3</sup> a great grandson of 'Abd Allāh<sup>4</sup> 'Alī, the son-in-law of Muhammad, had in his possession a *Ṣaḥīfa* which contained certain laws.<sup>5</sup> Another *Ṣaḥīfa* is reported to have been in the possession of Samura b. Jundab, which according to Goldziher is identical with his *Risāla* to his son, containing many *Aḥādīth*.<sup>6</sup> Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh also had a *Ṣaḥīfa* the contents of which were later on related by Qatāda.<sup>7</sup> Sa'd is also reported to have had a book out of which his son related certain practices of Muḥammad.<sup>8</sup> al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* has mentioned a *Ḥadīth* which is related from the book of 'Abd Allāh b. Abī Aufa.<sup>9</sup> Abū Bakr, the first caliph, is reported to have collected together 500 *Aḥādīth* which he destroyed because he suspected that he might have accepted some of these *Aḥādīth* from some unreliable persons.<sup>10</sup> 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās wrote down the *Aḥādīth* which he learnt from Abū Rāfi'<sup>11</sup>. He appears to have collected *Aḥādīth* in more than one book. al-Trimidhī reports in his *Kitāb al-'Ilal* that some people from al-Tā'if brought to Ibn 'Abbās one of his books and read it out to him.<sup>12</sup> He is also reported by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr to have left at his death so many books that they might serve as a load for a camel. These books were later used by his son, 'Alī.<sup>13</sup> It is from these books

(1) TIS, vol. iv, part 2, p. 9.

(2) UGh, vol. iii, pp. 233-35.

(3) TIS, vol. iv, part 2, p. 8.

(4) TT, vol. viii, No. 80.

(5) SB, k. 'Ilm, b. *kitābat al-'ilm*, vol. i, p. 21 et al.

(6) JT, "al-Yamin ma' al-Shāhid", vol. i, p. 160.

(7) MSt., vol. ii, p. 10.

(8) *Ibid.*

(9) *Ibid.*

(10) TdH, vol. i, p. 5.

(11) TIS, vol. ii, part 2, p. 123.

(12) JT, p. 238.

(13) TIS, vol. v, p. 216.



of Ibn 'Abbās that al-Wāqidī may have drawn some of his materials, as is shown by a passage quoted in the *Mawāhib*.<sup>1</sup> Abū Hurayra also is reported to have written down *Aḥādīth*—probably at the later stage of his life. These written *Aḥādīth* he showed to Ibn Wahb<sup>2</sup> and to Umayya al-Damrī.<sup>3</sup> The *Ṣaḥīfa* of Hammām based on the reports of Abū Hurayra is well known.<sup>4</sup>

Over and above the reports that we have received with regard to these *Ṣaḥīfas* and books compiled by the Companions of Muḥammad, we have also received many reports of writing down the stray *Aḥādīth* by them. According to a report in the *Sunnan* of al-Tirmidhī, one of the *Anṣār* complained to Muḥammad of his weak memory and was advised by him to take the help of his right hand (i.e. writing).<sup>5</sup> Another Companion, al-Rāfi' (also called Abū Rāfi'), secured Muḥammad's permission to write down *Aḥādīth*.<sup>6</sup> One Abū Shāh, hearing Muḥammad's oration in the year of the conquest of Mecca, requested him that it be written down for him, and his request was granted.<sup>7</sup> 'Utbān b. Mālīk al-Anṣārī liked a *Ḥadīth* so much that he wrote it down.<sup>8</sup>

Some stray *Aḥādīth* are reported to have been written down by the Companions at their own sweet will. Some of these may not be genuine, and some may prove to be identical with one another.

Muḥammad himself had dictated laws with regard to the poor-tax,<sup>9</sup> the prayers and fasts, alms and blood-money, etc.<sup>10</sup>

(1) ML.

(2) FB, vol. i, p. 148.

(3) JBI, part i, p. 74.

(4) See SHM.

(5) JT, vol. ii, p. 91.

(6) JASB, vol. xxv, pp. 312-18.

(7) SB, k. 'Ilm, b. kitābat; FB, p. 148.

(8) JASB, vol. xxv, p. 319.

(9) SDq, pp. 204, 209, 485.

(10) TIS, vol. i, part 2, p. 19.



One document containing laws with regard to the alms which had been sent to the officials was found after his death, attached to his sword, and came into the possession of his successors.<sup>1</sup>

There are, of course, traditions which forbid the writing of any thing other than the Qur'ān generally, and of *Hadīth* particularly. Abū Sa'īd Sa'd b. Mālik al-Khudrī, Zayd b. Thābit, the scribe of Muḥammad, and Abū Hurayra have related such traditions.<sup>2</sup> Many other Companions and many *Tābi'ūn* are reported to have disliked and discouraged the writing of *Hadīth*. In this connection have been mentioned the names of 'Alī, 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar, Abū Mūsa, Ibn Sīrīn, Ḍaḥḥāk, 'Abīda, Ibrāhīm, Ibn al-Mu'tamar, al-Auzā'i, 'Alqama, 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Abd Allāh, al-'Uyayna, and others.<sup>3</sup>

Some of these (like 'Alī and Ibn 'Abbās) are, as we have already seen, also reported to have written the *Hadīth* and possessed some *Ṣaḥīfas* and books. Some of them (like Ḍaḥḥāk, Ibrāhīm and 'Alqama) are said to have objected to the writing of the *Hadīth* in the form of a book, but not to making such notes of it as might serve as help to the memory. Some (like 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd and Ibn Sīrīn) are said to have been against the writing of *Hadīth* in any form.<sup>4</sup>

The Muslim doctors have tried to explain this apparent contradiction between these *Aḥādīth* in various ways. Ibn Qutayba in his *Tā'wīl Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth* says that either the prohibitive *Aḥādīth* belonged to an earlier period in the life of Muḥammad and are cancelled by the later permissive ones or the prohibition was meant only for such Companions as were not well trained in the art of writing, and that such of them as could be relied upon to write correctly were allowed

(1) SAD, *Zakāt al-Sā'ima*, vol. i, p. 226.

(2) MAH, ii, 403; iii, 13; v, 183; SD, pp. 64ff.; SM, k. *Zuhd*, b. *ḥukm*, *kitābat*, vol. ii, p. 414.

(3) JBI, vol. i, pp. 63-68; JASB, vol. xxv, pp. 303ff.

(4) SD, *loc. cit.* JASB, *loc. cit.*



to write the *Hadīth* also. al-Nawawī in his Commentary on the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim has offered some other explanations. Goldziher holds that the whole controversy with regard to the permissibility of writing down *Aḥādīth* arose long after the death of Muḥammad.<sup>1</sup>

We know, however, that though the art of writing was introduced into Arabia some time earlier than the birth of Muḥammad, and Arabic prose works were not entirely unknown to the Arabs before him,<sup>2</sup> still neither the art of writing nor the Arabic prose works had been popular in the peninsula before the advent of Islam. Before Islam, in the whole of Mecca (the most advanced town in Arabia) only seventeen persons knew how to write.<sup>3</sup> In Madīnah where the influence of the Jews (who are said to be the teachers of the Arabs in this art) had been considerable, the number of the Arabs who could write was less than a dozen, only nine being mentioned by Ibn Sa'd in his *Ṭabaqāt*.<sup>4</sup> He also says that writing was rare in Arabia before Islam, and that it was considered a great distinction among the Arabs to know it. Hence such of them as combined the knowledge of the art of writing, swimming and archery were known as *al-kāmil*, the perfect.<sup>5</sup> It is also stated that Dhu' al-Rumma, the last Mukhaḍram poet of Arabia, concealed his knowledge of this art on account of the fear of the public opinion against it.<sup>6</sup> "The Beduin", says Goldziher, "despises reading and writing even to-day".<sup>7</sup>

(1) MSt, vol. ii, pp. 196-97. JASB, vol. xxv, pp. 375ff.

(2) *Ibid.* pp. 204-205;

(3) FB, pp. 471f.

(4) These are : Abū 'Abs; Ubayy b. Ka 'b; 'Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥa; Aus b. Khaulī; Mundhir b. 'Amr; Usayd and his father, al-Ḥuḍayr; Sa 'd b. 'Ubāda; Rāfi 'b. Mālik

(5) TIS, iii, 2, p. 91.

(6) KAg, vol. xvi, p. 121.

(7) MSt, vol. i, p. 112.



The Prophet did a good deal towards making this art popular among the Arabs. It cannot be without his efforts that such Muslims as came under his influence at an early age (e.g. 'Alī, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ and 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās) learnt the art of writing. He asked 'Abd Allāh b. Sa'id b. al-'Āṣī, the Meccan, to teach the art of writing to the people of Madīnah.<sup>1</sup> He ordered Shifā', the daughter of 'Abd Allāh, to teach this art to Ḥafṣa, one of his wives.<sup>2</sup> He declared after the battle of Badr that each one of those prisoners of war, who were too poor to pay the required ransom and who knew the art of writing could gain liberty by teaching the art of writing to Muslim boys.<sup>3</sup> It was from one of these prisoners of war that Zayd b. Thābit, the trusted scribe of the Qur'ān, had learnt this art.<sup>4</sup> It could not have been without the suggestion of Muḥammad, however, that 'Ubāda b. al-Ṣāmit taught the Qur'ān and also the art of writing to some of the *Aṣḥāb al-ṣuffa* one of whom presented him with a bow.<sup>5</sup>

Indirectly also Muḥammad played an important part in making the art of writing popular among the Arabs—viz. by establishing among them a state which necessitated the writing of treaties with the various tribes, letters to the various chiefs, orders to the state officials, and laws for conducting the affairs of the state. Even so, his immediate successors made the knowledge of writing compulsory in the schools established by them.

Muḥammad, therefore, cannot be said to have had an 'aversion to the scribes' (Sprenger). His sayings prohibiting the writing of *Hadīth* in particular, or of any thing other than the Qur'ān in general, which are weaker and fewer than the permissive *Aḥādīth*, must have been based either on the generally unfavourable public opinion prevailing in Arabia at the

(1) UGh, "'Abd Allāh b. Sa'id b. al-'Āṣī".

(2) JEn, p. 472.

(3) TIS, ii, 2, p. 14.

(4) TIS, ii 2, p. 14.

(5) MAH, v, 315.



beginning of his life as a prophet, or on the possibility of their being mixed up with the Qur'ān about the purity of which he was so scrupulous. As soon as he found that these dangers were over, he permitted that *Hadīth* and things other than the Qur'ān might be written. The date of one of the *Aḥādīth* in the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*—i.e. the permission to write an oration for Abū Shāh in the year of the conquest of Mecca—favours the view that the permissive *Aḥādīth* are later in date than the prohibitive ones, and therefore cancel them. The dictation of certain laws already referred to supports this theory. The attitude of 'Umar I towards the collection of *Aḥādīth* shows that the prohibitive sayings of Muḥammad were not in force at that time. It is reported that 'Umar had thought of collecting *Aḥādīth*. It is extremely unlikely that in spite of the prohibition by Muḥammad he could have considered the matter seriously for a whole month, that all the Companions should have advised him in favour of collecting the *Aḥādīth*, and that in giving his own decision (contrary to their unanimous advice) he himself should have come forward with his fear of the negligence of the Qur'ān—instead of quoting the sayings of Muḥammad in favour of his decision.

Such European orientalist also as have made a critical study of the subject hold that some *Aḥādīth* were written down during the very life-time of the Prophet. Dr. A. Sprenger, who rightly claims to have been the first to submit the sources of the life of Muḥammad to a critical enquiry, says :—

“It is generally believed that the traditions were preserved during the first century of the Hijra solely by memory. European scholars under the erroneous impression that *ḥaddathanā*, ('I have been informed by') is the term by which the traditions are usually introduced, are of opinion that none of the traditions contained in the collection of al-Bukhārī had been written down before him.” “This”, he continues, “appears to be an error. Ibn 'Amr and other Companions of Muḥammad committed his sayings to writing, and their example was followed by many of the *Tābi'ūn*”.<sup>1</sup>

(1) JASB, vol. xxv, p. 303.



The same laborious and learned orientalist (in his instructive article on "The Origin and progress of writing down historical facts"),<sup>1</sup> while discussing the pros and cons of the problem, says :—

"There were nevertheless some men even among the theologians and traditionists who from the earliest time wrote down the information which they wished to preserve. The most important among these are 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr, Anas b. Mālik and Ibn al-'Abbās, who were Companions of the Prophet and preserved more records of him than any one else. The *Aḥādīth* related by 'Abd Allāh and Ibn al-'Abbās were preserved by their families in writing".

Ignaz Goldziher says :—"The choice of the word *Matn* for the text of a *Hadīth* as opposed to *Isnād* (the chain of authorities) can also serve as a proof of the falsity of the assumption that according to the opinion of the Muslims, originally the writing of the *Hadīth* was prohibited, and it had been reduced to oral traditions only. It may be assumed that the writing of the *Hadīth* was a very old method of its preservation. The aversion to writing them is the result of ideas which came into being at later times. Such of them (the *Aḥādīth*) as are said to have been preserved in writing already in the first century may be thought to constitute the oldest ingredient of the *Hadīth* materials. There is nothing against the assumption that the Companions and their students wanted to guard the sayings and the decrees of Muḥammad, against forgetfulness by writing them down. How, then, in a society in which the wise sayings of ordinary men were preserved in writing, the preservation of the sayings of the Prophet would be left to the mere chance of oral tradition! Very many Companions carried their *Ṣaḥīfas* with themselves, and out of them they conveyed their teachings and culture to their students. The contents of these *Ṣaḥīfas* were called *Matn al-Ḥadīth*."<sup>2</sup> Another passage in the same book reads :—"Such reports show, that the *Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth* do not reject the theory that

(1) JASB, *loc. cit.*

(2) MSt. vol. ii, pp. 8-9.



the sayings of the Prophet were written down in the earliest times. In fact we have been able to observe a series of statements on the existence of Tradition-*Ṣaḥīfas* of some of the Companions".<sup>1</sup> The conclusion arrived at by Goldziher in these passages is incontrovertible. But his theory that the whole controversy about the permissibility of the writing down of *Aḥādīth* arose long after the death of Muḥammad is unwarranted and indefensible. It is based on his assumption that the controversy arose as a result of some ideas which came into being at later times. But such 'ideas' have not been defined by him.

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(1) MSt, ii. 195.



### CHAPTER III

#### HADĪTH AFTER THE DEATH OF THE COMPANIONS

*"May God bless him who heard from us a saying, and preserved it (in his memory) so that he might carry it to others; for verily, many a person carries knowledge to a man more learned than himself, and many of those who carried knowledge have not assimilated it themselves".*

*(al-Tirmidhī)<sup>1</sup>*

#### THE FOLLOWERS (*al-Tābi'ūn*)

Many a time Muḥammad had expressed a desire that his *Hadīth* should be well cultivated and widely spread. His wish, as we have seen, had been carried out by his faithful and devoted Companions.

After the death of Muḥammad and the establishment of the vast Islamic empire, the Companions settled down in different towns in the various provinces. In these towns they were surrounded by a large number of such Muslims as had not seen Muḥammad, and were eager to hear the reports of his words and deeds from the lips of those who had lived and associated with him. Abū Dardā' at Damascus, Abū Idrīs at Emesa, Hudhayfa at Kūfa, Anas at Baṣra, Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh and 'Ā'ishah and others at Madīnah, and other Companions at other important towns, had round about them large circles of eager disciples who not only learnt from them the *Hadīth* of their master, but also acquired from them the spirit of search for Traditions and for their careful cultivation and preservation.

Abū Dardā,' had such a large crowd of disciples round about him as are found in the trails of the kings.<sup>2</sup> Mu'adh b. Jabal together with 32 other Companions related *Hadīth* to

(1) J T., ii, 90.

(2) TdH, vol. i, p. 22.



their disciples at Emesa.<sup>1</sup> Hudhayfa delivered lectures on *Hadith* to a band of eager disciples in a mosque at Kūfa.<sup>2</sup> Ubayy b. Ka'b was one of the many Companions who taught *Hadith* to their students in the mosque at Madīnah.<sup>3</sup>

The early Muslims appear to have been extremely eager to hear the reports of Muḥammad's *Hadith* from the lips of his Companions. It is related that such a large crowd of them collected round a Companion when he related *Hadith* that he was compelled to get on to the roof of a house in order to continue his address.<sup>4</sup> Abū Ḥanīfa, the founder of the Hanafite school of Muḥammadan Law, reports that when he went to Mecca with his father in order to perform the pilgrimage, he saw there a large crowd listening with great attention to a Companion who related to them the *Aḥādīth* of Muḥammad.<sup>5</sup>

These eager disciples of the Companions are known among the traditionists by the honourable title of *al-Tābi'ūn*, i.e. the Followers. They are divided into several classes according to the order of the Companions from whom they learnt and reported traditions. al-Ḥākim has classified them into 15 classes of which he has explicitly mentioned only 4.<sup>6</sup> Ibn Sa'd in his *Ṭabaqāt* has classified them into nine classes. But the majority of the later writers on *Asmā' al-Rijāl* have classified them into three classes only :—

1. the disciples of such Companions as accepted Islam before the conquest of Mecca;
2. the disciples of such Companions as embraced Islam after the conquest of Mecca; and
3. the disciples of such Companions as were not fully grown up at the time of Muḥammad's death.

(1) MAH, vol. v, p. 328.

(2) TIS, vol. iii, part 2, p. 23.

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *Ibid.* vol. v, p. 213.

(5) JBI, part 1, p. 45.

(6) MUH.



Of the *Tābi'ūn*, the earliest to die is said to be Zayd b. Ma'mar b. Zayd who was killed in one of the Persian wars in the 30th year of the Islamic era. The one who was the last to die is said to be Khalf b. Khalifa who died in 180 A.H.<sup>1</sup> The *Tābi'ūn*, therefore, may be said to have preserved and propagated *Hadīth* for more than a century—at first in association with the Companions; and when the latter had passed away, with the help of their own disciples. The disciples of the *Tābi'ūn* are called *Atbā' al-Tābi'in* (the followers of the followers). Some of these *Atbā'* lived till about the end of the first quarter of the third century A.H.,<sup>2</sup> before the end of which were compiled almost all the important works in the *Hadīth* literature. The *Tābi'ūn*, however, who after the death of the Companions were taken as authority on *Hadīth*, transmitted their knowledge to their own disciples, who in turn passed it on to the next generation.

#### THE TRADITIONISTS' DEVOTION TO HADĪTH

All these various generations of the Traditionists displayed marvellous activity in the pursuit of *Hadīth*. Their love for the subject had been profound. Their enthusiasm for it knew no bounds. Their capacity to suffer for the sake of it had no limit. The rich among them sacrificed riches at its altar; and the poor among them devoted their lives to it in spite of their poverty.

We have already seen how devotedly the Companions had served the cause of *Hadīth*. In their zeal for its propagation they had gone so far as was likely to cause the negligence of the Qur'ān itself, and 'Umar I had to stop them from it.<sup>3</sup> After the death of the Companions, however, the Followers and their disciples propagated *Hadīth* with unabated vigour. al-Zuhri (d. 124/741) spent money like water for the sake of it.<sup>4</sup> He had been so busy with works on *Hadīth* that his wife

(1) FM, pp. 396-97.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) TIS, vol. v, p. 140.

(4) TdH, vol. i, p. 97.



preferred his having three more wives to his love for books.<sup>1</sup> Rabi'a (d. 136/753) in his search for *Hadith* spent all he possessed, and at the end had to sell the beams of the roof of his house and to live on the rotten dates which were thrown away by the people of Madinah.<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Mubarak spent 40,000 coins in search of *Hadith*.<sup>3</sup> Yahya b. Ma'in (d. 233/847) spent on *Hadith* 150,000 silver coins which he had inherited from his father, and at the end he did not possess even a pair of shoes to put on.<sup>4</sup> 'Ali b. 'Ashim spent 100,000 silver coins;<sup>5</sup> al-Dhahabi spent 150,000 coins;<sup>6</sup> Ibn Rustam, 300,000;<sup>7</sup> and Hisham b. 'Ubayd Allah (d. 221/835), 700,000 silver coins<sup>8</sup> in search of *Hadith*. Khaṭīb Baghdādī gave away 200 gold coins to those who devoted their lives to *Hadith*.<sup>9</sup> Many other instances of this type can easily be gathered from the books on *Asmā' al-Rijāl*.

Such of the Traditionists, however, as were not born with silver spoons in their mouths did not give up their study of the subject in despair. On the contrary, they carried on their pursuit of it with inexhaustible energy and remarkable assiduity. Ibn Abī Dhī'b (d. 159/775) in his thirst for knowledge had to fast for days and nights continuously on account of his poverty.<sup>10</sup> Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, in spite of his poverty, stayed at Baṣra for fourteen years in order to learn *Hadith*. During this period once he had to sell even his clothes in order to get his livelihood.<sup>11</sup> al-Shāfi'ī, the founder of one of the

(1) WA, No. 574.

(2) JBI, i, 97.

(3) MUd, i, 17.

(4) TA, pp. 629-30.

(5) TdH, i, 290.

(6) TA, p. 174.

(7) TdH, i, 355.

(8) MUd, i, 17.

(9) *Ibid.*

(10) TdH, i, 172.

(11) TdH, ii, 147.



schools of Islamic law, wrote the *Hadīth* which he had learnt, on pieces of bones (which he kept in a bag), because in his student life he was too poor to buy paper.<sup>1</sup> al-Bukhārī, the famous traditionist, lived on grass and herb for three days during his travels in search for *Hadīth*.<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact, it seems that most of the Traditionists had been poor, because many important authorities on *Hadīth* hold that poverty and readiness to suffer are indispensable for knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

The number of the seekers of *Hadīth* who flourished during the various periods of its history had been legion. Among the Companions Abū Hurayra alone is said to have related traditions to more than 800 students. At Kūfa alone when Ibn Sirīn visited that town, there lived 4000 students of *Hadīth*.<sup>4</sup> At Madīnah with Abū Zinād (d. 132 A.H.) alone associated 300 students of *Hadīth*;<sup>5</sup> and later on, the door of Mālik b. Anas became a rendezvous for a crowd of them who sometimes even quarrelled among themselves for a seat near the Imām at his lectures.<sup>6</sup> The discourses of 'Alī b. 'Āṣim on *Hadīth* were attended by more than 30,000 students;<sup>7</sup> those of Sulaymān b. Ḥarb. by 40,000;<sup>8</sup> those of 'Āṣim b. 'Alī, by 120,000;<sup>9</sup> those of Yazīd b. Hārūn, by 70,000;<sup>10</sup> and those of Abū Muslim Kajjī,<sup>11</sup> by an immensely large number of students of whom only those who used ink-pots for taking down notes were found to exceed 40,000.<sup>12</sup>

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(1) JBI, i, 98.

(2) MFB, 566.

(3) JBI, i, 97-98.

(4) TR, 275.

(5) TA, 719.

(6) *Ibid.* 534.

(7) TdH, i, 290.

(8) TB, ix, 33.

(9) TH, vii, 71.

(10) TdH, i, 291.

(11) TH, ix, 100; TdT, ii, 196; TB, vi, 122.

(12) A vast majority of the students of *Hadīth* mentioned here may have been irregular students. As regards the regular ones, their number



The attendance of such an incredibly large number of students at lectures on *Hadīth* may be explained in the light of some of the methods of teaching *Hadīth* which will be described later. The best one of these methods, which is called *Samā'* (Hearing), includes *Imlā'* (Dictation). It consists in the recitation of *Hadīth* by the teacher to his students. In order to do this, the teacher must purify his mind from all worldly thoughts, dress cleanly and properly, and appoint some scholars well versed in *Hadīth* to keep order among the students and to reproduce his recitations to such students as might be unable to follow the lecture because of sitting at a distance from him. The lecturer should stand up at an elevated place. He should recite every word of each tradition distinctly, loudly and slowly so that the students might be able to write it down. The various reproducers should repeat exactly, distinctly, slowly and loudly the words of the lecturer to the students near about each one of them. Their number should be in accordance with the number of the students attending the lectures. In the case of the lectures delivered by Abū Muslim al-Kajjī at Baghdad, there were appointed by him seven reproducers. At the end of the lecture, the place occupied by the students who attended the lecture was measured, the ink-pots used by them and left by them in the field were counted, and after careful calculation the number of the students who wrote down the *Hadīth* was fixed at 40,000.<sup>1</sup>

The number of such traditionists as had attained mastery of the subject and were taken as authorities on it was also

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must naturally have been limited. For instance, the number (1,000) of students who attended the school of *Hadīth* founded by Abū 'Alī al-Ḥusaynī (d. 393 A.H.) at Nishapur is remarkable for an organized institution. See EIss, "Madrasa", J. Pedersen, pp. 300-310. It is also stated in this article (p. 309) that "the *madāris* introduced an innovation into the relationship of teacher to student, when a definite number of students (as a rule twenty) was allotted to a particular teacher".

(1) *Op.cit.* .



quite large. At Madīnah alone when Imām Mālik went there to study *Hadīth*, there lived 70 such traditionists as had associated with the Companions and had learnt *Hadīth* from them and from the Followers.<sup>1</sup> In Baghdad alone there lived 800 *shuyūkh* at the end of the second century A.H.

### FORGERY IN HADĪTH AND ITS CAUSES

These and a large number of similar instances which may easily be gathered from the works on *Asmā' al-Rijāl* show how large a number of Muslims pursued the study of *Hadīth* in every period of the history of Islam. But all of them could be neither equally competent to take up this great task, nor could they be equally serious and careful in pursuing it. During the period following the death of Muḥammad many Companions (as we have already seen) were censured by their friends for their carelessness and want of insight into what they related from the Prophet.<sup>2</sup> Among the Followers and their Successors, with the rise of the various parties and sects in Islam, the number of the careless and insincere students and teachers of *Hadīth* greatly increased. Some of them were careless in the choice of their own teachers; some of them made *bona fide* mistakes in relating to their students what they had learnt for themselves; and some of them made wilful changes in the text or in the *Isnād* of some *Hadīth*, and forged others for the sake of personal profit or party gain or even with the pious intention of calling people to the Path of God and to the dictates of Religion.

Thus originated and gained currency among the Muslims a large number of forged traditions which may be traced to one of the following four classes of forgers :—

1. The Heretics and the enemies of Islam who wanted to destroy the simplicity and the purity of the faith.

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(1) TA, 532.

(2) See also *infra*, chapter ix.



2. The party leaders and the sectarian preachers and the seekers of favours from the ruling chiefs.
3. The Story-tellers (*al-Quṣṣās*).
4. The so-called pious traditionists who either committed *bona fide* mistakes, or held it permissible to forge traditions for religious and pious purposes.

1. The Heretics (*al-Zanādiqa*) who flourished under various garbs during the various periods of the history of Islam, caused havoc in the *Hadīth* by their wilful forgery of thousands of traditions, and by propagating them among the Muslims. "The *Zanādiqa*", says Hammād b. Zayd, "have concocted 14,000 traditions in the name of the Prophet of Islam".<sup>1</sup> To name only a few of them, I may mention 'Abd al-Karīm b. Abī al-'Auja, Bayyān b. Sam'ān and Muḥammad b. Sa'id, all of whom were put to the sword for their heresies, and the first of whom alone had forged 4000 traditions in the name of the Prophet of Islam.<sup>2</sup> Another heretic who had been killed by the order of Hārūn al-Rashīd is said to have confessed that he had forged 1000 *Aḥādīth*.<sup>3</sup>

2. The Heretics, however, could not do much damage to the Traditions of Islam. They were well known as anti-Islamic. Their statements could not be accepted by the Muslim world. The real danger to *Hadīth* was caused by the Muslim friends themselves. The various party leaders, the numerous sectarian preachers, and the seekers of favours from the caliphs and their chiefs, proved more dangerous to the genuineness and purity of *Aḥādīth* than the declared Heretics. These Muslims, with their avowed profession of the faith of Islam, could not be expected to put into the mouth of their own Prophet what they themselves had forged. But immediate personal gain or even the vain hope of it, has often

(1) TR, 103.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) MUd, i, 286.



proved to be a greater force than truth and righteousness, and the love of party and sect has often been more powerful than that of high principles. Some of the party leaders and sectarian chiefs in the history of Islam also failed to rise above personal and party considerations. They did not hesitate to ascribe to their Prophet a saying that might serve their immediate object. al-Muhallab (d. 83/702), the great adversary of the Khawārij, confessed that he had forged traditions against them.<sup>1</sup> 'Awāna b. al-Ḥakam (d. 158/774) and others who belonged to the Umayyad party concocted traditions in their favour.<sup>2</sup> Abū al-'Ayna Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim forged *Aḥādīth* in favour of the 'Alid party.<sup>3</sup> Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim al-Ṭāḥiqānī (d. 310/922), an important member of the *Murjīa* sect, forged such *Aḥādīth* as supported the doctrines of his sect.<sup>4</sup> Ghiyāth b. Ibrāhīm, a courtier of al-Mahdī, made such intentional changes in a *Ḥadīth* as might please the caliph.<sup>5</sup> Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767) expressed to the same caliph his readiness to concoct for him some traditions edifying 'Abbās, the forefather of the caliph.<sup>6</sup> Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sulamī forged *Aḥādīth* in favour of the *Ṣūfis*.<sup>7</sup> Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan concocted traditions edifying 'Ā'ishah and in favour of the *Sunnīs*.<sup>8</sup> As a matter of fact, most of the traditions edifying certain individuals or tribes or a particular province or district or town, or glorifying a sect or a sectarian leader, (many of which are cited by Goldziher),<sup>9</sup> owe their origin to some of these wilful forgers, and are declared by eminent authorities on *Ḥadīth* to be mere concoctions.<sup>10</sup>

(1) MSt, ii, 44; cf. WA, No. 764.

(2) MUd, vi, 94.

(3) IM, v, No. 1136.

(4) TR, 103.

(5) IM, iv, No. 1296.

(6) TI, 73.

(7) IM, v, No. 466.

(8) *Ibid.* No. 431.

(9) MSt, ii, ch. 2.

(10) Ibn al Jauzī (Maudu'āl).



3. The *Quṣṣās* (the story-tellers). Though much humbler in position than the leaders of parties or sects, these were not less dangerous than the latter for the traditions of Islam. Their main business at first was to relate moral stories after the morning and the evening prayers in order to exhort the people to do good deeds. Their origin may be traced back to the time of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb who is said to have permitted for the first time al-Tamīm al-Dāri (whom al-Damiri<sup>1</sup> considers to have been the first story-teller in Islam) or 'Ubayd b. 'Umayr (whom Ibn Sa'd<sup>2</sup> considers to have been the first story-teller) to relate moral stories to people. Mu'āwiyah,<sup>3</sup> the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, gave them the title of 'the common story-tellers' —i.e. as opposed to 'the special story-tellers' who were appointed by Mu'āwiyah himself in order to counteract the propaganda of his opponents against him.<sup>4</sup>

These story-tellers, among whom may be included the common street preachers who held no official position, had to deal with the credulous common people, who appreciated amusing stories and fables more than the hard facts, dry laws, and genuine traditions. They soon grew in number, spread in Mesopotamia and Central Asia, and adapted themselves to their audience, who were attracted more by their amusing stories than by the learned discourses of the scholars. At an early period in the history of Islam,<sup>5</sup> they degraded their position to that of fable-mongers, whose main object was to please the public and to squeeze gold and silver coins out of their pockets. In order to gain this object, they invented thousands of such amusing fables as might appeal to the common herd of people, attributed them to the Prophet, and related them to their audience. One of them related to his audience on the authority of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and Yaḥyā b. Ma'in

(1) See MSt, ii, 161 f.

(2) TIS, v, 34.

(3) MSt, ii, 161-62.

(4) KQ, 303-304, fn.

(5) 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbas (d. 68/687) had condemned them as enemies of God. SB, "*Tafsīr, Kahf*", vol. iii, p. 100.



that when one said "There is no god but God" (*Lā Ilāh illā Allāh*), there was created by God for each letter (or word) uttered by him a bird with a beak made of gold and feathers made of pearls. Then this story-teller related a long story in continuation of the forged tradition. At the end of his sermon, he was told by Aḥmad and Yaḥya who were present on the occasion that they had never related any tradition to him. The story-teller tried to silence his critics by making fun of them.<sup>1</sup> Another *Qaṣṣ* related to an audience in a mosque numerous traditions on the authority of Ḥarīm b. Ḥayyān (d. 46 A.H.); and when he was challenged by the latter, he said that he was not the only Ḥarīm in the world. "As a matter of fact" said the undaunted story-teller, "fifteen persons by the name of Ḥarīm were present in this very mosque".<sup>2</sup> Kulthūm b. 'Amr al-'Attābī once collected a crowd round himself in a mosque, and related to them with complete *Isnād a Ḥadīth* saying that he who touched the tip of his nose with his tongue might rest assured that he would never be sent to Hell. The audience showed their readiness to accept this forgery as a genuine tradition—by trying to ascertain their fate through their success in experimenting with what they had heard.<sup>3</sup>

The selfishness of the *Qaṣṣāy* was so great that they not only did not feel ashamed of forging traditions in the name of the Prophet for their own personal gain, but they also could have no love for one another. A proverb says: 'One story-teller does not love another'.<sup>4</sup> But sometimes in order to do mischief to the people and to gain their own end, two story-tellers would work together to forge traditions. Thus, one of them stood up at one end of a street narrating traditions on the merits of 'Alī, whereas the other stood up at the other end of it—relating to his audience traditions exalting Abū Bakr. They gained money from the Shī'ah as well as from

(1) MI, i, No. 140; MSt, ii, 160.

(2) MSt, ii, 164; KAg, xii, p. 5.

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) KAm,



the Nāṣibīs in this way, and later on equally divided it among themselves.<sup>1</sup>

Their activities were so dangerous for the traditions of Islam as well as for the State itself that Mālik b. Anas did not allow them to step into the mosque at Madīnah.<sup>2</sup> Various traditionists censured many of them, and in the year 279 they were stopped from their activities in Baghdad.<sup>3</sup>

4. The most dangerous class of the forgers of traditions consisted of the so-called pious traditionists themselves. Their love for the traditions of Islam could not be doubted. Their sincerity of purpose could not be denied. But it is rightly said (by an eminent English writer): 'Every one kills the object of his love'. Many of the pious traditionists tried—unknowingly, of course—to kill the Science of Traditions by forging thousands of traditions, by ascribing them to Muḥammad, and giving them currency among the Muslims.

Nuḥ b. Abī Maryam, who had studied theological sciences with theologians of great reputation, was known as *al-ḡāmi'* (the man of comprehensive scholarship) on account of his vast and varied learning. He acted as a judge at Merv during the reign of al-Manṣūr, the second Abbasid caliph. He related traditions describing the virtues of the various chapters of the Qur'ān. But when he was pressed for the authorities from whom he had received these traditions, he confessed that he had forged them for the sake of God and in order to attract people to His Book.<sup>4</sup> Abān b. Abī 'Ayyāsh, who was one of the most godly persons of his time, was severely censured by Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj, and more than 1500 traditions related by him on the authority of Anas were declared to have no foundation.<sup>5</sup> Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Bāhili (d. 275/888) was counted as one of the most pious persons of his time; but

(1) YD, iii, 179.

(2) MSt, ii, 168.

(3) ATb, iii, 2131.

(4) MIt, iii, 245; TR, 102.

(5) MIt, i, 7-8.



Abū Dā'ūd having looked into 400 traditions which were related by him, found that all of them were forged ones. Aḥmad himself confessed to have forged traditions in order to make the hearts of the people tender and soft<sup>1</sup> (*targīq al-qulūb*). Sulaymān b. 'Amr al-Nakha'i, generally known by his surname Abū Dā'ūd, was a contemporary of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, and he fasted in the day and offered prayers in the night more than any of his contemporaries. But he is characterized by the critics as a liar and forger of traditions.<sup>2</sup> Wahb b. Ḥafṣ was generally recognised as a virtuous Muslim. His asceticism was so acute that for twenty years he did not talk to any one. But he did not hesitate to forge traditions.<sup>3</sup> These and many other well-intentioned and outwardly pious Muslims—like Maysara b. 'Abd Rabbiḥī<sup>4</sup> the Persian; Aḥmad b. Ḥarb (d. 234/848), the man of Piety;<sup>5</sup> 'Ubād b. Kuthayr<sup>6</sup> (d. 150/767); 'Abd Allāh b. Ayyūb<sup>7</sup> Hushaym b. Bashīr<sup>8</sup> (104-183/722-799); Ziyād b. 'Abd Allāh;<sup>9</sup> and the followers of Muḥammad b. Kirām al-Sijistānī<sup>10</sup> held that it was permissible to forge traditions in order to attract people to good deeds and to warn them against the evil ones. They forged hundreds of traditions and concocted thousands of *Isnāds*, and considered their forgeries to be religious and pious and hoped for reward from God for them.

These impious heretics, and various worldly and godly Muslims (i.e. the foes as well as the friends of Islam), forged thousands of traditions, and gave currency to them all over

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- (1) MIt, 67; IM, i, 832.
  - (2) *Ibid.* i, 419.
  - (3) LM, vi, No. 819.
  - (4) *Ibid.* No. 480; TR, 102.
  - (5) MIt, i, No. 321.
  - (6) *Ibid.* ii, 13.
  - (7) *Ibid.* 23.
  - (8) *Ibid.* iii, 257.
  - (9) MSt, ii, 48.
  - (10) TR, 102.



the Muslim world. Muḥammad b. 'Ukkāsha and Muḥammad b. Tamīm forged more than 10,000 traditions.<sup>1</sup> Abū Sa'id b. Ja'far forged more than 300 traditions in the name of Abū Hanīfa only.<sup>2</sup> Aḥmad al-Qaysi<sup>3</sup> concocted more than 3000 traditions. Aḥmad al-Marwazī<sup>4</sup> forged more than 10,000 traditions. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī<sup>5</sup> forged more than 1000 traditions. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Sulaymān forged about 200 traditions. Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Jubārī<sup>6</sup> forged many thousand traditions. 'Abd al-Raḥīm<sup>7</sup> forged more than 500 traditions. Further, a large number of other forgers—like Ziyād b. Maymūn,<sup>8</sup> Shurayk b.<sup>9</sup> 'Abd Allāh, Ṭalḥa b. 'Amr,<sup>10</sup> etc.—concocted thousands of false *Aḥadīth*, some of which are quoted in the sermons and recited from the pulpits even to-day.

#### THE HONEST AND CRITICAL TRADITIONISTS

But there lived in every period in the history of *'Ilm al-Ḥadīth* numerous truth-loving, God-fearing, honest and scrupulous traditionists who neither cared for personalities and parties, nor feared power and public opinion. Their sole object in life was to learn the true traditions of their prophet, to preserve their purity and genuineness, and to propagate them among the Muslims. They pursued it neither as a matter of pleasure and pastime, nor for the sake of pecuniary gain or public fame, nor in order to influence people and their thought. They followed it for its own sake. To them 'knowledge' was the end, not a means. With them, as Sufyān al-Thaurī

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- (1) TR100 *et al.*
  - (2) MIt, i, No. 22.
  - (3) *Ibid.* No. 562.
  - (4) *Ibid.* No. 564.
  - (5) *Ibid.* No. 1816.
  - (6) *Ibid.* No. 403.
  - (7) *Ibid.* ii, 128.
  - (8) *Ibid.* i, No. 2918.
  - (9) *Ibid.* No. 3641.
  - (10) *Ibid.* No. 3950.



says, the pursuit of *Hadīth* had become like a disease which they could not help.<sup>1</sup>

During the early period of the history of Islam, when the Companions who had associated with Muḥammad were living, many of them (as we have already seen)<sup>2</sup> had been extremely scrupulous in relating the traditions, as well as in accepting those related by their friends. Among the Followers (*al-Tābi 'ūn*), a large number of whom flourished during the second half of the first and the first half of the second century of the Islamic era, Ibn Abī Layla (20-83), Qāsim b. Muḥammad, Rajā', b. Hayawa (d. 112/730), Muḥammad b. Sirīn (35-115/655-728, Abū Zinād (d. 132/749), Yahya b. Sa 'id (d. 143/760), and many others had been extremely honest and strict with regard to the authorities from whom they received the traditions of their prophet.

Ibn Abī Layla used to say that one could not be credited with the knowledge of *Hadīth* unless he was able to reject some of them and to accept others.<sup>3</sup> Qāsim and Rajā' and Ibn Sirīn had been scrupulously honest about each word of the *Aḥādīth* which they related,<sup>4</sup> and the last one of them had declared that *Hadīth* was religion, and had warned people to be careful with regard to those from whom they received it.<sup>5</sup> Ṭā'ūs b. Kaysān of Yemen had advised the students of *Hadīth* to learn it from pious persons only,<sup>6</sup> and Abū al-'Āliya relates that whenever a seeker for *Hadīth* went to any traditionist to learn it from him, he enquired at first about the piety (reliability) of his would-be teacher.<sup>7</sup> al-Zuhri was of opinion that the *Isnād* (chain of authorities) was indispensable for a *Hadīth*.<sup>8</sup> Abū Zinād states that when he went to

(1) JBI, ii, 129.

(2) See *supra* pp. 13ff.

(3) JBI, ii, 132.

(4) *Ibid*, i, 80.

(5) SM, i, 11.

(6) \*SD, 61.

(7) SM, i, 4.

(8) TR, 183.



Madīnah in order to learn *Hadīth*, he found there one hundred such traditionists as were considered reliable in ordinary matters, but unreliable as teachers of *Hadīth*—apparently because they did not come up to the high standard of honesty which was expected from the teachers of traditions, and therefore the traditions related by them were not accepted by any one.<sup>1</sup> Ismā'il b. Ibrāhīm says that only such traditions are to be accepted as are related by persons who were strict in observing religious duties.<sup>2</sup>

The spirit of scrupulous care with regard to the choice of the teachers of *Hadīth* among the Followers was imbibed by their students and kept up by a large number of them throughout the period during which they flourished. Among them Mālik b. Anas (93-179/711-795), on going to Madīnah in search of *Hadīth*, found in the mosque seventy such traditionists as had gathered their knowledge from the Companions and the Followers, but he accepted traditions only from such of them as were trustworthy, and whenever he had any doubt with regard to any part of a tradition, he gave up the whole of it as unreliable.<sup>3</sup> He held that one should not accept the *Aḥādīth* related by the light-witted, nor those related by persons who held erroneous views and propagated them, nor those related by people who told lies ordinarily (even if they were not accused of it in connection with *Hadīth*), nor those related by such eminent, honest, and pious persons as were not conversant with the subject-matter of the *Aḥādīth* which they related.<sup>4</sup>

Many of the contemporaries of Mālik shared with him his scrupulous care with regard to the authorities from whom they received the traditions. These include Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj (83-160/702-776), Sufyān al-Thaurī (97-161/715-777), Hammād b. Salama (d. 167/783), Hammād b. Zayd (98-179/716-795), 'Abd Allāh b. al-Mubārak (121-181/738-797),

(1) SM, i, 12.

(2) SD, 61.

(3) TA, 531-32.

(4) JBI, ii, 48; TD, iv, 172.



Fuḍayl b. 'Iyād. (d. 187/802), Yahya b. Sa'id al-Qaṭṭān (120-198/737-813), and many others.

This careful scrutiny of those who related traditions was continued with unabated vigour by a large number of the students of *Hadīth* in the succeeding generations of the traditionists. al-Shāfi'i (156-204/767-819), a student of Mālik, and the founder of one of the important schools of Islamic law, made a careful scrutiny of the reliability of not only those from whom he himself received tradition, but also of their authorities.<sup>1</sup> He rejected the *Mursals* of even al-Zuhrī!<sup>2</sup> Yahya b. Ma'in (156-233/772-847) did not include any *Hadīth* in his works unless it was supported by 30 independent chains of authority.<sup>3</sup> Ibrāhīm b. Sa'id claims to have included in his collections only such *Aḥādīth* as were supported by 100 chains of authorities.<sup>4</sup> Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's care about the authorities is well known. Even on his death-bed he did not forget to ask his son to strike off a *Hadīth* from his great *Musnad* because it was contrary to many more reliable traditions.<sup>5</sup> al-Bukhārī's scrupulous honesty and exactitude are generally admitted. Muslim's scrutiny of the *Rāwīs* is clearly shown by his instructive introduction to his great work. Abū Dā'ūd al-Sijistānī (200-275/835-910), al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892), al-Nasā'ī (d. 302/914), Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (224-310A.H. ), 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Baghawī (214-317/829), and a large number of other traditionists, who lived in the various periods of the history of *Hadīth*, were sincere, honest and scrupulous in the pursuit and propagation of the subject.

### THE CRITICISM OF THE REPORTERS

These and other sincere devotees of *Hadīth* were not content with the mere scrutiny of the reporters of traditions, but they

(1) RSH, 57 ff.

(2) TK, i, 10.

(3) TA, 629; TH, viii, 17.

(4) Mlt, i, 18; TH, viii, 110.

(5) TK, i, 202-203.



also tried to make known to the whole Islamic world the character of the interested forgers and of the incompetent and erroneous reporters (*Rāwīs*). During the early period of the history of Islam when Companions were living, Ibn 'Umar (who was told that Abū Hurayra included the field-dogs also among the exceptions to the dogs commanded by the Prophet to be killed) did not hesitate to point out that Abū Hurayra had a personal interest in the matter.<sup>1</sup> And, therefore, according to Goldziher, he forged these words. But according to the Muslim traditionists, Ibn 'Umar meant to accept Abū Hurayra's version, because he had good reason to know this tradition better. Murra al-Hamdānī (d. 71/690), wanted, however, to kill al-Ḥārith on account of his forgeries. Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī (d. 96/714) informed his pupils of the doubtful character of al-Ḥārith, and asked them to keep away from Mughīra b. Sa'id and Abū 'Abd al-Raḥīm,<sup>2</sup> for they were liars. Qatāda (d. 117/735) pointed out to the students of *Hadīth* the false presumptions of Abū Dā'ūd; the blind Ibn 'Aun<sup>3</sup> (d. 151/768), being asked about a *Hadīth* related to him by Shahr, laid stress on his unreliability. Sufyān al-Thaurī, Shu'ba, Mālik and Ibn 'Uyana instructed people to make the character of the unreliable reporters known to the public.<sup>4</sup> As a matter of fact, numerous Companions and Followers had criticised various reporters of the traditions; and Shu'ba and Yahya b. Sa'id, who are generally said to be the first critics of the reporters,<sup>5</sup> had only made special efforts with regard to their criticism.<sup>6</sup> Ibn 'Adī (277-360/890-970), while describing his predecessors in the field of the criticism of the reporters of *Hadīth*, has mentioned the names of Ibn 'Abbās, 'Ubāda b. al-Ṣāmit and Anas among the Companions, and of al-Sha'bī, Ibn Sirīn and Sa'id b. al-Musayyib among the Followers. He also says that the

(1) ZDMG, vol. xxiii, p. 593, "Ursprung und Bedeutung der *Tabaqāt*", Loth; MSt, ii, 49.

(2) SM, i, 15.

(3) *Ibid*, 16.

(4) *Ibid*, i, 13.

(5) TA, 316.

(6) TR, 262.



number of the critics of *Rijāl* in the early period was comparatively small because of the small number of the weak reporters, and little chance of mistakes and forgeries. When about the middle of the second century, the erroneous reporters increased in number, a group of important traditionists discussed the integrity and reliability of the reporters of traditions. These included al-A'mash, Shu'ba, Mālik, Ma'mar, Hishām al-Dastuwā'i, al-Auzā'i, al-Thaurī, Ibn al-Mājishūn, Hammād b. Salama, Layth b. Sa'd, and after them, Hushaym, Ibn al-Mubārak, Abū Ishāq al-Fizārī, al-Mu'āfi b. 'Imrān, Bishr b. al-Mufaḍḍal, Ibn 'Uyana, Ibn 'Ulayya, Ibn Wahb and Wakī'.<sup>1</sup>

These honest traditionists were guided in their pursuit of *Hadīth* neither by the government and the party leaders, nor by the sectarian and personal considerations, but by the pure love of genuine traditions. The Umayyads and the Abbasids made little difference to them. Under the Abbasids also, who by their outward show of love for religion tried to reconcile them, the traditionists continued their strict neutrality towards the government and the various parties striving for power. Of the three 'Abd Allāh's who may be considered as pillars of traditions, the son of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb took no part in civil strife, and rejected the suggestion of Marwān that he should make a bid for the caliphate.<sup>2</sup> 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās kept strict neutrality in the fight for the caliphate between Ibn al-Zubayr and 'Abd al-Malik.<sup>3</sup> 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-Āṣ went up to the field of Šiffin on account of the persistence of his father, but took no part in the battle between Mu'āwiya and 'Alī, and throughout the rest of his life he repented himself even for having gone to the field.<sup>4</sup> Abū Dhar,<sup>5</sup> Muḥammad b. Maslama,<sup>6</sup> Sa'id b. al-Musayyib,<sup>7</sup>

(1) Quoted by al Jazāiri. TN, 114.

(2) TIS, vol. iv, part 2, p. 111.

(3) UGh, iii, 194.

(4) *Ibid*, 234.

(5) TIS, vol. iv, part 1, p. 161

(6) *Ibid*, iii, 2, p 20.

(7) *Ibid*, v, pp. 90 ff.



Abū al-‘Āliya,<sup>1</sup> al-Muṭarrif,<sup>2</sup> al-Ḥasan b. Yasār,<sup>3</sup> al-Masrūq,<sup>4</sup> and many other Companions and Followers kept strict neutrality during the civil strife between the various parties in the early history of Islam. Some of them preferred prison and physical torture to giving support to any party against their own conviction. For example, Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyib was whipped by Ibn al-Zubayr, and was put to torture by Hishām b. Ismā‘īl who would have him declare allegiance to ‘Abd Allāh or to the sons of ‘Abd al-Malik. Yahya b. Abī Kuthayr (d. 129/746) was severely tortured for condemning the Umayyads.<sup>5</sup> ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Rāfi was beaten by the order of ‘Amr b. Sa‘īd.<sup>6</sup> Mālik was whipped by the order of al-Manṣūr, because some of his decrees (*fatāwā*) did not suit the latter.<sup>7</sup> Sufyān al-Thaurī (97-161/715-777) was ordered by the same caliph to be put to death.<sup>8</sup>

The unpleasant and heated conversations between Aḥnaf b. Qays and Mu‘āwiya,<sup>9</sup> between al-A‘mash and ‘Abd al-Malik,<sup>10</sup> between Sālim and Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Malik,<sup>11</sup> between Abū Ḥāzim and the same caliph,<sup>12</sup> between al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri and ‘Umar b. Hubayra,<sup>13</sup> and between al-Auzā‘ī and ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī,<sup>14</sup> clearly show the highly strained relationship between the orthodox traditionists and the Umayyad as well as Abbasid rulers and authorities.

- (1) TIS, vii, 1, p. 82.
- (2) *Ibid*, 103.
- (3) *Ibid*, vii, 1, p. 119.
- (4) *Ibid*, vi, p. 52.
- (5) *Ibid*, v, pp. 90, 93, 95-96.
- (6) TdH, i, 115.
- (7) KK, i, 284.
- (8) WA, No. 560.
- (9) TA, 287.
- (10) WA, No. 304.
- (11) *Ibid*, No. 270.
- (12) *Ibid*, Nos. 251, 278.
- (13) *Ibid*, No. 155.
- (14) TdH, i, 162-84.



Under the Abbasids also many scrupulous orthodox Muslim scholars (like Abū Ḥanīfa,<sup>1</sup> Sufyān al-Thaurī,<sup>2</sup> etc.) continued their attitude of indifference towards the caliphs and their government. Some of these scholars—e.g. Ahmad b. Ḥanbal,<sup>3</sup> Nu‘aym b. Ḥammād,<sup>4</sup> Yūsuf b. Sa‘īd,<sup>5</sup> Abū Mush‘ir,<sup>6</sup> and others—refused to agree with the views of the caliph al-Mā’mūn, and suffered imprisonment and hard punishment. As a matter of fact, indifference towards the cruel rulers was a definite principle with them.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, we find that few of the compiler of the works on *Ḥadīth* which are accepted by the Muslim world as standard and authoritative books on the subject, and were compiled mainly under the Abbasids, had been either in the employment of the caliphs or favourites of their court.

It is due to the continuous, hard labour of these honest and scrupulous traditionists that the *Aḥādīth* of Muḥammad have been saved from utter loss, and have come down to us in the present form. During the very early period in the history of Islam when the Companions who had been the only custodians of *Ḥadīth* had settled down in different towns, they undertook long arduous journeys, met them in their newly adopted homes, associated with them as long as necessary, and collected together the knowledge which had been scattered by the Companions throughout the vast Islamic empire.

#### TRAVELS IN QUEST OF KNOWLEDGE (*Traditions*)

Long travels in quest of knowledge were recommended by Muḥammad himself in many of his sayings which are related by various independent authorities. Such traditions

(1) WA, No. 775.

(2) TdH, i, 183 ff.

(3) TK, i, 203-16.

(4) TdH, ii, 6 ff.

(5) *Ibid.* 161 ff.

(6) TH, vii, 62.

(7) JBI, i, 163-186.



are found in many important collections of *Hadīth*. Some of the Companions themselves had undertaken long journeys either to learn a *Hadīth* or to refresh their memory of it. Abū Ayyūb travelled from Madīnah to Egypt just for the sake of refreshing his memory on a *Hadīth* which he—together with ‘Uqba b. ‘Āmir—had learnt from Muḥammad himself.<sup>1</sup> Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh travelled for one whole month in order to hear from the lips of ‘Abd Allāh b. Unays only one *Hadīth* which Jābir had already learnt through another person.<sup>2</sup> Another Companion went from Madīnah to Damascus only for the purpose of hearing from the lips of Abū Dardā a *Hadīth* which he had already received from him through one of his friends<sup>3</sup>.

The precepts of Muḥammad and the example of his Companions stimulated the Followers, and they spared no pains in their pursuit of knowledge (*Hadīth*). They travelled from place to place in order to gather the knowledge of as many *Aḥādīth* as possible and returned home like bees laden with honey to impart the precious store they had accumulated to the crowd of their eager disciples.

Makḥūl (d. 112/730) travelled through Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, and the Ḥijāz, and gathered the knowledge of all the *Aḥādīth* which he could get from such Companions as lived at these places.<sup>4</sup> He used to boast that for the sake of knowledge he had “travelled round the world”.<sup>5</sup> Sha‘bī (d. 104/722) said in reply to a question as to how he had gathered the knowledge of such a large number of *Aḥādīth*: “By hard work, long travels and great patience”.<sup>6</sup> He used to say that if for the sake of only one word of wisdom any one travelled from one end of Syria to the other end of al-Yaman, he (al-Sha‘bī) would not consider his journey

(1) JBI, i, 93-94.

(2) *Ibid.* 35.

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) TdH, i, 95.

(5) TT, iv, No. 145.

(6) TdH, i, 71.



to have been undertaken in vain<sup>1</sup> al-Masrūq (d. 63/682) travelled so much for the sake of *Hadīth* that he was known as *Abu al-Safar* (the Traveller). Sa'īd b. al-Musayyib (d. 94/712) used to travel for days and nights in order to learn a single *Hadīth*.<sup>2</sup>

By and by, long journeys in quest of knowledge became a fashion, and from the middle of the second century after the Hijra, the seekers for *Hadīth* began to vie with one another in undertaking such journeys. "From one end of the Muslim world to the other, from Andalusia to Central Asia", says Goldziher, "wandered the assiduous, indefatigable seekers of *Hadīth*, and gathered traditions from every place in order to relate them to their listeners. This was the only possible method of collecting together in an authentic form the *Aḥādīth* which were scattered in the various provinces. The honourable title of *al-Raḥḥāl* (the great traveller) or *al-Jawwāl* (the great wanderer) is seldom used with them in any other sense than what is generally understood by them. The title *Tawwāf al-Aqālīm* (the wanderer round the world) is no hyperbolical designation for the travellers among whom there were some such persons as could boast to have travelled four times throughout the East and the West". "They travelled throughout these countries", adds Goldziher, "not for the sake of sight-seeing and gaining experience, but in order to meet the traditionists at these places, to hear traditions from and to profit by each of them—just like the bird that sits on a tree only to pick its leaves".<sup>3</sup>

These seekers of *Hadīth* gathered their knowledge from every source of which they were aware, and took from each source all that they could get out of it. This is apparent from the large number of teachers of some of them, and from the long time which some of them spent with some of their teachers. Abū Ishāq al-Sabī'i (d. 126/743), for example, learnt *Hadīth*

(1) JBl, i, 95.

(2) TdH, i, 46 ff.

(3) MSt, ii, 177.



from 300-400 teachers;<sup>1</sup> 'Abd Allāh b. al-Mubārak (d. 181/797), from 1100;<sup>2</sup> Mālik b. Anas, from 900.<sup>3</sup>...Hishām b. 'Abd Allāh learnt from 1700 teachers;<sup>4</sup> Abū Nu'aym, from 700<sup>5</sup> or 800; Ibn 'Asākir, from 1300 traditionists.<sup>6</sup> al-Zuhri kept the company of Sa'id b. al-Musayyib for 10 years.<sup>7</sup> Hammād b. Zayd spent 20 years in the company of Ayyūb;<sup>8</sup> Rabī' b. Anas went frequently to Ḥasan Baṣrī for the same period.<sup>9</sup> 'Amr b. Zirrā associated with Ibn 'Ulayya for 23 years.<sup>10</sup> Ibn Jurayj kept the company of 'Aṭā' for 18 years;<sup>11</sup> and Thābit b. Aslam studied *Hadīth* with Mālik b. Anas for 40 years.<sup>12</sup>

Thus through the honest, hard work and incredible, marvelous activity of the Followers and of the succeeding generations of Muslims were collected together the reports of the sayings and the doings of Muḥammad, which were scattered in all the various places or parts of the large dominions. The first organized attempt at their collection, as we have seen was made about the end of the first century by the pious caliph, 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz. The reports with regard to his activities in connection with the collection of *Aḥādīth* are found in many important early works connected with the subject—e.g. the *Muwaffā* of Mālik,<sup>12</sup> the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī, and the *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Sa'd. These reports of course differ from one another in certain minor details. But the main facts are common among them all. The pious nature

(1) TA, 646.

(2) TdH, i, 255.

(3) TA, 353.

(4) TH, vii, 69.

(5) *Ibid*, v, 45.

(6) MUd, v, 140.

(7) TIS ii, 2, p. 131.

(8) TA, 218.

(6) *Ibid*, 210.

(10) TdH, i, 153.

(11) TdH, i, 111.

(12) See *supra* p. 9 et al.



of the caliph and his religious enthusiasm as well as the peaceful atmosphere of his reign support the reports contained in these early works. Dr. Sprenger accepts this theory of the beginning of the collection of *Aḥādīth*. But Goldziher (and after him Guilaume) doubt the reliability of these reports; but their arguments are not conclusive.<sup>1</sup>

Once begun, the collection of *Aḥādīth* went up by leaps and bounds. Within two hundred years were compiled almost all the important works in the *Hadīth* literature, most of which were produced by honest and scrupulous scholars who had little to do with the political groups or sects, and had little care for worldly gains. These scholars traced the lives and discussed the character of all the reporters of traditions, and produced side by side with their collection of *Hadīth* a vast literature on the reporters as an aid to the formal criticism of *Aḥādīth*. They discussed the comparative value of the reliability of *Aḥādīth*, and produced an extensive literature on the *Mawḍū'āt* (forged traditions). They founded and developed various important branches of learning for the sake of the formal as well as material criticism of *Hadīth*.

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(1) MSt, ii, 210-11.



## CHAPTER IV

### HADITH LITERATURE

#### THE BEGINNINGS

The beginning of *Hadith* literature must be traced back to the letters, laws and treaties which were dictated by the Prophet of Islam himself, and were preserved in his time. In like manner, it must be traced to the numerous *Ṣaḥīfas* which were compiled by the Companions and the Followers, to which reference has already been made in this work. Goldziher has mentioned<sup>1</sup> several of these *Ṣaḥīfas*. Horovitz is uncertain about the genuineness of the *Ṣaḥīfas* ascribed to the Companions; but he has no doubt about the genuineness of those compiled by the Followers. "Already in the generation following that of the Companions of the prophet (*Aṣḥāb* or *Ṣaḥāba*), that of the *Tābi'ūn*", says he, "people began to collect the traditions of the sayings and doings of the Prophet which were current at the time. If the data for the *Aḥādīth* of a number of the Companions of the Prophet recorded on leaves (*Ṣaḥā'if*) or in books (*kutub*) is partly of uncertain worth, still there can be no doubt that such written records were no longer a rarity in the generation of the *Tābi'un*, who derived this knowledge from the Companions".<sup>2</sup>

The discovery of the *Ṣaḥīfa* of Hammām b. Munabbih which has been published by Dr. Ḥamīdullah shows the nature and the character of these *Ṣaḥīfas*. It proves that they were not mere memoranda as Goldziher suggests, but were complete records of some of the sayings of Muḥammad just like those found in the later collections of *Hadith*.

(1) MSt, ii, 8-11.

(2) IsC, vol. 2, p. 536.



There existed some books in Arabic, however, even before the advent of Islam<sup>1</sup> which introduced a new spirit and fresh energy for the literary activities among the Arabs. It has already been proved that books were written on many branches of Arabic literature during the second half of the first century of the Islamic era. 'Abīd b. Sharyā wrote (during the reign of Mu'āwīya I) a book on the pre-Islamic kings of Arabia,<sup>2</sup> which enjoyed some popularity during the 10th century A.D.<sup>3</sup> Ṣuhar b. al-'Abbās, who lived during the reign of the same caliph, wrote a book on proverbs.<sup>4</sup> Theodocus, a physician in the court of al-Ḥajjāj, wrote some books on Medicine.<sup>5</sup> Ābān collected (according to Professor Horovitz) materials for a book on *Maghāzī*.<sup>6</sup> 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr, who died about the end of the first century of the Hijra, is said to have written a book on the said subject. "Although nowhere in the older sources", says Horovitz,<sup>7</sup> "is it said that 'Urwa composed an actual book on the *Maghāzī*, it is nonetheless certain that he collected and set forth a series of the most important events in the Prophet's life". The same collector of *Maghāzī* also compiled some books on *Fiqh* which he burnt on the day of the battle of Ḥarra.<sup>8</sup> How, then, could the Muslims of those by-gone days have neglected the collection of *Aḥādīth*, which had been accepted by them since the life-time of the Prophet as an authority next to the Qur'ān for all their religious and social problems.

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(1) MSt, ii, 204-205; JASB, xxv, 375.

(2) FN, 89.

(3) LHA, 13. It is surprising that Margoliouth does not mention even the name of this author in ArH.

(4) FN, 90.

(5) *Ibid.* For the Arabic medical works of this period see SAP.

(6) IsC, i, 536-39.

(7) *Ibid.*

(8) TIS, v, 133.



[illegible]

م کتاب المسند

والحمد لله رب العالمين فحصلوا منه على فقه في علم الله المأخوذ به  
مفهوم من شفايته محمد بن الحسين الأصبهاني رحمه الله السلام والهدى والفلاح



The early sources, of *Hadīth*, however, fall into three distinct groups :—First, the books on *Maghāzī* or *Sīrat*, like those of Ibn Ishāq and others, in which are found most of the historical *Aḥādīth*. Second, the books on *Fiqh*, like the *Muwatṭā* of Imām Mālik and the *Kitāb al-Umm* of al-Shāfi'i, in which are found a large number of legal *Aḥādīth*. Third, the works in which *Aḥādīth* as such have been collected. It is with some of these works and their authors that we propose to deal in this chapter.

#### MANY OF THE MUSNADS ASCRIBED TO EARLY AUTHORS WERE COMPILED LONG AFTER THEM

Of all the various classes of *Hadīth* works (which have been described earlier) the *Musnads* appear to be the earliest in origin. But many of them which are generally ascribed to some of the early authorities on *Hadīth* were in fact, compiled by some of the later traditionists who collected together such *Aḥādīth* as were related to them by, or on the authority of, any one important *rāwī*. Such are the *Musnads* of Abū Ḥanīfa, al-Shāfi'i, 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, and some others, none of whom is known to have compiled any *Musnad* work. The *Musnad* which is generally known as that of Abū Ḥanīfa was compiled by Abū al-Mu'ayyid Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Khwārizmī (d. 665/1257).<sup>1</sup> The *Musnad* of al-Shāfi'i was compiled on the basis of his *Kitāb al-Umm* and *al-Mabsuṭ* by Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Aṣamm (d. 246/860).<sup>2</sup> The work known as the *Musnad* of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz was compiled by al-Bāghandī<sup>3</sup> (d. 282/895). The *Musnad* of Abū Dā'ūd al-Ṭayālīsī also, which is considered to be the earliest *Musnad* work received by us,<sup>4</sup> had not been compiled in its present form by al-Ṭayālīsī himself, but by a certain traditionist of Khurāsān at a later date.<sup>5</sup>

(1) KZ, v, 535-36.

(2) *Ibid.* 540-41. Also see Illustration No. 1.

(3) JASB, xx, 391-488, A.H. Harley, "The Musnad of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz", intro.

(4) MAT, title page.

(5) KZ, v, 533.



## THE MUSNAD OF ABU DA'ŪD AL-ṬAYĀLISĪ

An old, rare and important manuscript of this work is preserved in the Oriental Public Library of Patna, and has been fully described by Maulawī 'Abd al-Ḥamīd in the catalogue of the MSS of *Hadīth* works in the O.P. Library at Bankipore.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of this manuscript has been published the Hyderabad edition of the *Musnad* by the Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif of Hyderabad.

*Life of al-Ṭayālīsī.* Abū Dā'ūd, Sulaymān b. Dā'ūd b. al-Jārūd al-Ṭayālīsī, to whom the *Musnad* is generally ascribed, was of Persian origin. He was born in the year 133/750-51 of the Hijra. He studied traditions with more than a thousand traditionists of his time, among whom are mentioned many prominent persons—e.g. Shu'ba (on traditions related by whom al-Ṭayālīsī seems to have specialized), Sufyān al-Thaurī, and others. He had a sharp, retentive memory, and is said to have dictated 40,000 traditions without using any notes. During his life-time he was accepted as an authority on *Hadīth* in general and as a specialist in the long *Aḥādīth* in particular. The students of traditions flocked round him from every part of the Muslim world. His teacher Shu'ba having heard him discuss certain traditions with some students, confessed that he himself could not do better. Strict traditionists like Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and 'Alī b. al-Madīnī accepted Ṭayālīsī's authority and related traditions from him. But he has been censured by some traditionists. The majority of them, however, attribute his mistakes to the slips of his memory. He contracted *elephantiasis* on account of his excessive use of *Balādhur* (*anacardia*), and died in the year 203/813 at the age of 70.<sup>2</sup>

*The Musnad.* In the present printed edition, this work consists of 2767 traditions which are related by 281 Companions whose narratives are given under their names, which are arranged in the order of (i) the first four caliphs; (ii) the rest

(1) OPC, v, 1, pp. 157-62.

(2) IT, iv, No. 316; TdH, i, 322.



of the Badriyūn; (iii) the Muhājirūn; (iv) the Anṣār; (v) the women; and (vi) the youngest Companions.

The printed text of the *Musnad* as well as its Patna MS appears to be incomplete. The traditions related by 'Abbās b. al-Muṭṭalib, al-Faḍl b. 'Abbās, 'Abd Allāh b. Ja'far, Ka'b b. Mālik, Salma b. al-Akwa', Sahl b. Sa'd, Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān, and 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ, to which reference has been made on other pages, are entirely missing from the body of the book. Some of the traditions related by 'Umar have also been misplaced.<sup>1</sup>

al-Ṭayālīsī, however, to whom the *Musnad* is generally ascribed, had neither compiled it nor arranged it in its present form. It is the work of his student, Yūnus b. Ḥabīb, who collected together the traditions which he had received from Abū Dā'ūd al-Ṭayālīsī, and arranged them in the form of the present *Musnad*. "It was some of the traditionists of Khurasan, says Ḥājī Khalīfa,<sup>2</sup> "who collected together the traditions which were related by Yūsuf (Yūnus) b. Ḥabīb from Abū Dā'ūd." Ḥājī Khalīfa is right in denying that the *Musnad* was compiled by al-Ṭayālīsī himself; but he seems to be wrong in attributing it to the students of Yūnus. The internal evidence shows that Yūnus himself was the compiler of the *Musnad*.<sup>3</sup>

Whoever be the compiler of the *Musnad*, its text clearly shows that he as well as the authorities from whom he received the traditions had been careful in handling them. Wherever there is any doubt in the text of a tradition, it has been pointed out. In some cases, various possible readings of certain expressions used in a tradition have been given; in some cases, certain explanatory phrases have been added—care having been taken that these additions might not be mistaken for a

(1) MAT, pp. 20-21.

(2) KZ, v, 533; cf. FM, 34.

(3) For all the parts of the book have been passed on his common authority.



part of the text itself.<sup>1</sup> In some cases it has been pointed out that some of the authorities had doubts with regard to a part of the text,<sup>2</sup> but that they cleared it by referring to some other authorities of their own time.<sup>3</sup> If a tradition has been received through more than one source, the fact has been pointed out at the end of the tradition. In some cases where the identity of a narrator had been doubtful (because more than one narrator bore the same name), effort has been made to establish his identity.<sup>4</sup> In some cases the character of some of the authorities also has been mentioned.<sup>5</sup> Certain traditions are related from narrators of unknown identity.<sup>6</sup> In some cases it has been pointed out that the tradition had been carried back to the Prophet by some narrators, and was stopped at a *Ṣaḥābī* by others.<sup>7</sup>

The subject-matters of the traditions contained in the *Musnad* are as varied and numerous as those of any other collection of *Aḥādīth*. But those relating to Miracles, personal or tribal virtues of the Companions, and prophecies with regard to future events or sects in Islam are very few.

The book appears to have enjoyed great popularity till the eighth century of the Hijra. The Patna manuscript alone bears the names of more than 300 male and female students of *Hadīth*, who had read it at different periods. Among them are found the names of such eminent traditionists as al-Dhahabī, al-Mizzī and others.<sup>8</sup> After the eighth century, it lost its popularity—so much so that now its manuscript has become extremely rare.

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(1) MAT, Nos. 77, 241, 263, 387, 484, 1060, 1158, 2179 etc.

(2) *Ibid.* Nos. 1021 etc.

(3) *Ibid.* Nos. 393, 644, 837, 886, 892, 917, 938, etc.

(4) *Ibid.* Nos. 381, etc.

(5) *Ibid.* Nos. 456, 718, 2254, etc.

(6) *Ibid.* Nos. 519, 1539, etc.

(7) *Ibid.* Nos. 794, etc.

(8) OPC, v, 1, pp. 157-62.



## THE MUSNAD OF IMĀM AḤMAD B. ḤANBAL

The most important and exhaustive of all the *Musnad* works which we have received is that of Imām Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal al-Marwazī al-Shaybānī. His remarkably saintly, selfless life, and his firm stand for his own conviction against the tyrannical inquisition and persecution (started by al-Mā'mūn and continued in accordance with his will by al-Wāthiq and al-Mutawakkil) created a halo of sanctity round his great collection of traditions. In spite of its great bulk, it survived the vicissitudes of time and was printed at Cairo in 1896.<sup>1</sup>

*Life of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal.* Imām Aḥmad, as his *nisba* shows, descended from the great Shaybānī tribe of the Arabs. The members of this tribe had taken an important part in the early conquest of Iraq and Khurasan by the Arabs, and in the civil wars between the Hashimites and the Umayyads (as partisans of the former). Ibn al-Haytham, a Shaybānī chief at Kūfa, was the first in that town to call people to 'Alī's side. Ḥusayn the Shaybānī was the standard-bearer of the tribe of Rabī'a at the battle of Ṣiffīn; and 'Alī wrote some appreciative verses in his praise.<sup>2</sup> Khālīd b. al-Ma'mar, also a Shaybānī, had taken a leading part on behalf of 'Alī in the same battle.<sup>3</sup> The sympathy of the Shaybānī's for the Banū Hāshim seems to have continued even after the Ummayyads were well-established on the throne. Khālīd b. Ibrāhīm Abū Dā'ūd,

- (1) Two later editions of this voluminous book have been published in Egypt: one by al-Bannā, and the other by Shākir. The former has not been available to me. But the latter edition (Egypt, vols. 1-16, 1954/1373) is most scholarly in which the learned editor has taken great pains to put together all the available material (with regard to the life of the author) from various sources. Shākir has given the number of each *Ḥadīth*, and has added at the end of each volume several highly useful indices. Unfortunately, this editor passed away after he had published only 16 volumes. His death is a great loss to the world of scholarship.
- (2) JA, 320. These references are to my own Ms. of the book. Its printed edition has not been available to me.
- (3) *Ibid.*



who succeeded Abū Muslim as a governor of Khurasan, had been one of the *Naqībs* of the Abbasids against the Umayyads.<sup>1</sup> One Ḥayyān, the perfumer, also (who is mentioned by al-Dinawarī as one of the important early Abbasid propagandists in Khurasan)<sup>2</sup> may be the same Ḥayyān who is mentioned among the fore-fathers of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. One of Aḥmad's fore-fathers was also a general of Khurasan who, according to Patton, fought to overthrow the Umayyads and to replace them by the Abbasids.<sup>3</sup>

Aḥmad himself was born in Baghdad in 164/780. There he was carefully brought up by his mother, his father having died during Aḥmad's infancy. There he received his early education with the teachers of the day, and began the study of *Hadīth* at the age of 15 with Ibrāhīm b. 'Ulayya.<sup>4</sup> Having completed his studies of *Hadīth* with all the traditionists of Baghdad, he started on his journey in search of 'Knowledge' in the year 183/799. He wandered through Baṣra, Kūfa, Yaman, the Ḥijāz, and other centres of *Hadīth* learning, attending the lectures of the traditionists, taking notes of them, and discussing them with the important traditionists and the fellow students, and returned to Baghdad laden with the precious store of 'Knowledge' about the year 195 when he met Imām al Shāfi'i and studied with him *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* and *Fiqh*.<sup>5</sup>

Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal appears to have assumed the role of a lecturer on traditions at an early age. It is said that a large number of students flocked round him in order to hear his lectures on *Hadīth* in a mosque in Baghdad in the year 189, when he went there for a short time.<sup>6</sup> He made, however, the service and the teaching of traditions the sole object and mission of his life, and continued it quickly and peacefully

(1) JA. 321; ATb, ii, 1358.

(2) AT, 335.

(3) AHM, 10.

(4) FT, i, No. 126; Sh, No. 13

(5) *Ibid.*

(6) *Ibid, loc. cit.*



till the year 218/833 when there arose a storm of persecution of the theologians throughout the Abbasid caliphate.

*The Persecution.* The caliph al-Mā'mūn accepted under the influence of his philosophically minded associates, the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'ān. He invited the Muslim theologians and traditionists to accept this doctrine. Some accepted it; others rejected it. Threats succeeded with a few more, and persecution with a few others. But a few important traditionists, including Aḥmad, refused to yield. The caliph, who was then at Tarsus, ordered that they should be put in chains and sent to him. The orders were carried out. But the caliph himself died before the pious prisoners had reached their destination. His death, however, was of no avail to the unfortunate prisoners. For Mā'mūn had made a will wherein he asked his successor to carry out his wishes with regard to the propagation of the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'ān. His two immediate successors, al-Mu'taṣim and al-Wāthiq, carried out his will with force and vigour and did not fail to use torture and persecution in order to achieve their end. This *Mihna* (persecution) was continued with varying vigour till the third year of the reign of al-Mutawakkil who stopped it in the year 234/848.

The great personality of al-Mā'mūn and the glamour of his court secured the conversion of the great mass of Muslim theologians to his views. Even such great traditionists as Yaḥya b. Ma'in and 'Alī b. al-Madīnī took refuge behind the thin veil of *Taqīya* ('disguise'), and surrendered their souls to the sword. It was Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal who at this serious juncture proved to be the saviour of Orthodoxy and Freedom of Conscience and Faith in Islam. He refused to submit to the dictates of the caliph against his own conscience, and stood firm like a rock. He tried to show the fallacies in the false reasoning of his opponents at the discussions; and he refused to yield to their show of force and threats, and boldly and patiently endured their persecutions. He was kept in prison for eighteen months; he was whipped by 150 executioners one after another;



his wrist was broken; he was badly wounded; and he lost consciousness. But he kept the purity of his conscience, and came out of the trial with the greatest credit. Bishr b. al-Hārith rightly said that God had cast Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal into the fire who came out of it like pure gold. More creditable for Aḥmad than his firmness at the fateful trial, however, was his un-exampled generosity towards his enemies and persecutors against none of whom he showed any ill will. Even against Aḥmad b. Abī Du'ād, who had taken the most prominent part against him in his *Miḥna*, he scrupulously abstained from expressing any opinion.<sup>1</sup>

After the *Miḥna*, Aḥmad lived for about 8 years. A greater part of this period he is said to have devoted to teaching.<sup>2</sup> The rest he spent in prayers. He died in the year 241 at the ripe age of 77. A wonderful scene of sorrow and grief followed. Not only over the whole of the great metropolis, but also over distant places, was cast a gloom of melancholy. His funeral was attended by a large crowd estimated to be between 600,000 and 2,500,000. It was something "the like of which must have seldom been witnessed any where".<sup>3</sup>

Throughout his life, Aḥmad bore an exemplary character. For money which is a great source of corruption he had little love. He always refused pecuniary help, large as well as small, from the rich princes as well as from poor associates and friends.<sup>4</sup> He cut off his connection with his sons, Ṣāliḥ and 'Abd Allāh, because they had accepted stipends from the caliph.<sup>5</sup> As a matter of fact, he hated luxury;<sup>6</sup> and his needs were few, which he always met by means of what he himself earned. Though in his religious beliefs he was extremely firm and strong, yet by nature he was very gentle, and was anxious

(1) TK, i, 203; AHM, 108, 112, 145.

(2) AHM, 142.

(3) TK, i, 203-204; AHM, 172.

(4) AHM, 14, 141, 147 etc.

(5) *Ibid.* 150.

(6) *Ibid.* 144.



not to do any harm to any one.<sup>1</sup> Honesty and justice were the most remarkable elements of his character.

Aḥmad's vast and profound knowledge of the traditions, his strictly pious and selfless life, his strong character, his firm and courageous stand for Orthodoxy against the persecution by the caliphs, his complete indifference to the court and the courtiers, and his forceful and inspiring personality established his reputation as an Imām and as the greatest authority on *Hadīth* in the whole Islamic world.<sup>2</sup> "His personality in his life-time and after his death", says Patton, "was a great force in the Muslim world, and it seems yet to be as powerful in its influence as the principles which he enunciated".<sup>3</sup> Even to-day his memory stands as a symbol of orthodoxy, and is a source of inspiration to the Muslim world.

Aḥmad devoted the whole of his life except the last few years to the service of *Hadīth*, learning it with the renowned traditionists of his time, spreading it through the large crowd of his students, throughout the length and breadth of the Muslim world, and writing on its basis and on that of the Qur'ān books on various theological problems. Thirteen of these books are mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm in his *Fihrist*;<sup>4</sup> and some others, e.g. *Kitāb al-ṣalāt*, have been published in his name.

*The Musnad.* The most important of Aḥmad's works is his *Musnad* which contains the largest number of *Aḥādīth* that has been received by us, and which may aptly be called his *opus magnum*. The period of compilation of this work is not known. But from the nature as well as the contents of the work itself it is clear that it must have occupied the compiler's mind for a long time.

Aḥmad's main object in compiling this huge book was to collect together neither all the strictly genuine traditions nor

(1) AHM, 152.

(2) TT, i, No. 1261; TA, 142-45.

(3) AHM, 194.

(4) FN, 229.



all those relating to any particular subject or supporting any particular school of thought in Islam, but to put together all such traditions of the Prophet as according to Aḥmad were likely to prove genuine (if put to the test), and could therefore for the time being serve as basis for argument. The traditions not included in the *Musnad* have no force, Aḥmad is reported to have said.<sup>1</sup> But he never claimed that all that it included was genuine or reliable. On the contrary, he struck off many traditions from his book; and even when he was in his death-bed, he asked his son to strike off a *Hadīth*<sup>2</sup> from the *Musnad*, which shows that he was not sure of the authenticity of the whole content of his work.

In order to achieve his end, Aḥmad ransacked his own vast store of knowledge as well as the whole available literature on the subject.<sup>3</sup> He sifted 30,000 traditions out of 750,000 of them narrated by 700 Companions, relating to widely varied subjects viz. *Maghāzī*, *Manāqib*, Rituals, Laws Prophecies, etc.<sup>4</sup> He, however, read out the various parts of his notes to his students, and also to his sons and nephew in 13 years.<sup>5</sup> He wanted to put his notes together in the form of a *Musnad*. But death overtook him, and consequently, the heavy task of arranging the vast materials collected by Aḥmad, was left to his son, 'Abd Allāh, who edited the notes of his father.<sup>6</sup>

Aḥmad had not been strict in the choice of his materials and authorities. He included in his notes even such matters as could by no means fall within the scope of traditions. Many of the traditions contained in his *Musnad* are declared by the

(1) TK, i, 202.

(2) *Ibid.* 203.

(3) MAH, i, 308; iv, 269.

(4) FN, 229. But according to Ibn al-Nadīm, the *Musnad* contains more than 40,000 traditions.

(5) TK, i, 202; ZDMG, L, 472 fn.

(6) BM, 31.



traditionists of later date as baseless and *maudū'* (forged)<sup>1</sup> and many of the narrators relied upon by Aḥmad are declared by the authorities on *Asmā' al-Rijāl* as unreliable.

In this huge collection of *Aḥādīth* Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal showed the same scrupulous and minute care in reporting traditions from his own authorities of whatever value they be, as he had shown in his actual life and career. If he received a *Hadīth* from more than one narrator, he pointed out the least difference that existed between their reports. For instance, in a *Hadīth* reported to him by Wakī' and by Abū Mu'āwīya, the former used the word *Imām*, and the latter used the word *Amīr*, which difference Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal did not fail to point out explicitly.<sup>2</sup> In another *Hadīth*, two earlier *Rāwīs* differed in the use of *w* and *aw*; Aḥmad recorded the difference, and gave the two versions which were handed down to him.<sup>3</sup> In another *Hadīth*, the difference in the use of *ilayhi* and *'alayhi* is pointed out.<sup>4</sup> If the same narrator reported the same *Hadīth* with certain differences, it was also pointed out by Aḥmad. In a *Hadīth* narrated by Yazīd b. Hārūn, the change in his narration from *l'ukhrāhā* to *b'ukhrāhā* was noted.<sup>5</sup> The same exactitude is shown in some other instances also.<sup>6</sup> If any correction or amendment in the text or in the *isnād* of a *Hadīth* was suggested to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, he did not fail to make the necessary changes in his manuscript.<sup>7</sup>

Aḥmad's son, Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abd Allāh, maintained the scrupulous care and thoroughness of his father in editing the materials collected by him. He collated the whole of the huge but incomplete manuscript of his father with his own notes, which he had taken at his and other traditionists' lectures;

(1) ZDMG, L, 485-86, *et al.*

(2) MAH, ii, 252-53.

(3) *Ibid.* iii, 202.

(4) *Ibid.* vi, 101.

(5) *Ibid.* iii, 201.

(6) *Ibid.* i, 308; iii, 33; v, 352, 385.

(7) *Ibid.* ii, 184; vi, 420.



he also collated it with what he had learnt from him and others during conversations and general discussions with them.<sup>1</sup>

In case of such *Aḥādīth* as 'Abd Allāh had heard from his father, but which had been struck off from the manuscript, 'Abd Allāh pointed out in his notes the change that was made in the manuscript.<sup>2</sup> Where he found a slip of the pen in the manuscript of his father, he corrected it and reproduced the original in his notes; in some cases, he only pointed out that there was some mistake in the text.<sup>3</sup> Where he had any doubt about the text of the manuscript, he frankly expressed his doubt.<sup>4</sup> In some cases, he added<sup>5</sup> explanatory notes as well as numerous *Aḥādīth* taken from sources other than the manuscript he had been editing.<sup>6</sup> In all these cases he took great care that his own additions might not be mistaken by the reader as parts of the manuscript itself. As a matter of fact, he appears to have taken great care to keep up the text of the manuscript as exact as possible. He reproduced the words written in the original manuscript in separate letters not joined together (*al-muqaṭṭa'āt*), and added a note saying: "So was it written in the manuscript of my father; but when he read it to us, he pronounced it as one word".<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, 'Abd Allāh has been criticised by an eminent Indian traditionist of the last century, who says that the editor ('Abd Allāh) of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's *Musnad* has committed many mistakes in arranging and

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- (1) He says in his notes in connection with some traditions that he read it with his father (MAH, ii, 157). In connection with some of them, he says that he found them in the manuscript of his father (iii, 310; *op. cit.*). In connection with some of them, he says that he found it in the manuscript and also had heard it from his father, but had not made a note of it. (iv, 96).
- (2) MAH, iii, 182; iv, 96; v, 26.
- (3) *Ibid.* i, 252; ii, 449; iii, 3; iv, 225; v, 382; vi, 73.
- (4) *Ibid.* v, 358.
- (5) *Ibid.* 336.
- (6) *Ibid.* v, 326; vi, 326.
- (7) *Ibid.* iv, 91.



editing the work, and has included the narrations of the Madīnites in the *musnad* of the Syrians and those of the Syrians in that of the Madīnites.<sup>1</sup>

Aḥmad's *Musnad*, however, occupied an important position in the *Hadīth* literature, and served as an important source for various writers on different subjects in Arabic literature. "Among the *Musnad* works", says Goldziher, "the *Musnad* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal occupies the most stable position. The great esteem enjoyed by his memory in the pious world of Islam, the piety which hallowed his name and which for a long time served as a magic word against the most stubborn adversary belonging to the Mu'tazilī school, and stood as a symbol of Orthodoxy, saved his collection of *Hadīth* from complete literary fall from which most of the works of its type have suffered. It maintained its position in literature also for a long time as a source for important works and compilations".<sup>2</sup>

Of the numerous scholars and authors who used the *Musnad* as a subject for their commentary or adaptations or as a source for their own works or compilations, some may be mentioned here. Abū 'Umar Muḥammad b. Wāḥid (d. 345/956) reedited the book and added certain supplementary traditions to it.<sup>3</sup> al-Bāwari, the lexicographer (d. 499/1155), based his *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth* entirely on this book.<sup>4</sup> 'Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1234) used it as one of his sources for his biographical dictionary, the *Usd al-Ghāba*.<sup>5</sup> Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1505) included it among the important works of which he prepared the *Aṭrāf*.<sup>6</sup> Sirāj al-Dīn 'Umar b. Mulaqqin (d. 805/1402) made a synopsis of it. al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) based upon it his grammatical treatise, '*Uqūd al-Ẓabarjad*'.<sup>7</sup>

(1) BM, 31.

(2) ZDMG, L, 466.

(3) KZ, v, 534-35.

(4) MUd, vii, 29.

(5) See UGh, i, 9-11.

(6) TH, xxiv, No. 12.

(7) KZ, v, 535.



Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Umar b. al-Ḥādī al-Sindī (d. 1139/1726) wrote a large commentary on it. Zayn al-Dīn ‘Umar b. Aḥmad al-Shammā al-Ḥalabī made an epitome of it, which he called *al-Muntaqa min Musnad Aḥmad*.<sup>1</sup> Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh recedited it, arranging the traditions in the alphabetical order of the names of their original *Rāwīs*.<sup>2</sup> Nāṣir al-Dīn b. Zurayq prepared another edition of it in the form of a *Muṣannaf*; and Abū al-Ḥasan al-Haythamī compiled together such of the traditions contained in it as were not found in the six canonical collections.<sup>3</sup>

The *Musnad* did not only serve as a large mine of materials for Muslim theology and Arabic lexicography, but also because of the pious personality of its compiler, it had gathered a halo of sanctity round itself. This is shown by the fact that in the twelfth century a society of pious traditionists read it to the end in 56 sittings before the tomb of the Prophet in Madīnah.<sup>4</sup>

It appears, however, that on account of its large bulk and because of the compilation of many better planned and more practical works in *Hadīth* literature during the third and the fourth centuries of the Hijra, the *Musnad* of Aḥmad grew less and less popular, and its copies became more and more scarce so early as the middle of the fourth century of the Hijra. al-Muzanī, one of the leading traditionists of the time, was surprised to learn from one of the students of *Hadīth* that he had read 150 parts of the book with Abū Bakr b. Mālīk. Muzanī recalled that when he himself was a student in Mesopotamia, they used to be surprised to find even one part of the *Musnad* with any traditionist.<sup>5</sup> The scarcity of its manuscripts in the modern times, therefore, is (as Goldziher has pointed out) not a matter of surprise.

(1) KZ, v, 534-35.

(2) ZDMG, L, 470.

(3) BM, 31-32.

(4) EIs, "Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal".

(5) ZDMG, L, 467.



Like Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and Abū 'Dā'ūd al-Ṭayālīsī, many other traditionists also compiled *Musnad* works on the same lines, with certain differences in the details of arrangement. These include Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Ḥumayd (d. 249/863), Abū Usāma (d. 280/893), Ibn Abī Shayba (d. 235/849), Ibn Rāhawayh (d. 238/852), and others.<sup>1</sup>

### THE MUṢANNAF WORKS

More important than the *Musnad* works are the *Muṣannaf* works in *Hadīth* literature. To this branch belong the most important works on the subject e.g. the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, the *Jāmi'* of al-Tirmidhī, and the *Sunan* works like those of Nasā'ī, Abū Dā'ūd and others. The *Muṣannafs*, as we have seen, may be either *Jāmi'*...like the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī and the book of al-Tirmidhī or *Sunan* like the works of Abū Dā'ūd Sijistānī, Nasā'ī and others.

The early *Muṣannaf* works are almost entirely lost. The *Muṣannaf* of Wakī' is known to us only through references made to it in later works.<sup>2</sup> The earliest *Muṣannaf* work, incomplete manuscripts of which are still extant, is the *Muṣannaf* of Abū Bakr 'Abd al-Razzāq b. Humām (126/211/743-826) of Ṣan'ā in Arabia.<sup>3</sup>

'Abd al-Razzāq began the study of *Hadīth* at the age of 20, kept the company of Ma'mar for 7 years, and learnt *Hadīth* from him and Ibn Jurayj and other leading traditionists of the day. He became one of the important masters of traditions of his own time. Many of the recognized authorities of a later date sat at his feet and acquired knowledge from him. Traditionists like Yahya b. Ma'in and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal related traditions from him. It is said that after the death of the Prophet people never travelled in such a large number to meet any one as to meet 'Abd al-Razzāq.<sup>4</sup> He has been

(1) KZ, v, 532-543.

(2) MAH, i, 308. It is probably identical with the *Sunan* of Wakī' (d. 197/812) which is mentioned by Ibn Nadīm (FN, 226).

(3) MFB, 489.

(4) WA, No. 409.



declared as unreliable by some critics, but others considered him trustworthy.<sup>1</sup>

Two of his works are mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm.<sup>2</sup> One of them, the *Kitāb al-Sunan*, is identical with what is generally known as the *Muṣannaf*.<sup>3</sup> Ḥājī Khalīfa has mentioned his other works also.<sup>4</sup> His *Muṣannaf*, however, is divided like books of *Fiqh* into various books in which various traditions are arranged according to their contents. The last chapter of this work is on *Shamā'il*, and the last tradition is about the Prophet's hair.<sup>5</sup> More exhaustive than this *Muṣannaf*, however, is that of Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. Abī Shayba (d. 235/849). His grand-father worked as a judge of Wāsiṭ during the reign of Manṣūr, and his family produced many traditionists.<sup>6</sup> He himself had the credit of relating traditions to prominent traditionists like Abū Zar'a, al-Bukhārī, Muslim and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (who is said to have declared him unreliable).<sup>7</sup>

### ṢAḤĪḤ AL-BUKHĀRĪ

The most important of not only all the *Muṣannafs* but of all the works in *Hadīth* literature is the *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī who interrogated more than 1000 masters of *Hadīth* who lived in places so distant from one another as Balkh, Merv, Nishāpūr, the Hijāz, Egypt and Mesopotamia. al-Bukhārī sought aid of prayers before recording tradition, and weighed every word that he wrote with scrupulous exactitude. He devoted more than one-fourth of his life to the actual compilation his work, and at the end produced his epoch-making book which is accepted by most of the traditionists as the most authentic work in *Hadīth* literature,

(1) MIt.

(2) FN, 228.

(3) KZ, iii, 629.

(4) *Ibid.* ii, 369, 580; v, 88.

(5) BM, 51.

(6) KAS, 355b.

(7) MIt, " 'Abd Allāh b. Muhammad". \*



and which is considered by the Muslims in general as an authority next only to the Qur'ān.

al-Bukhārī, whose full name is Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ismā'il al-Bukhārī, was of Persian origin. He was born at Bukhara in the year 194/810.<sup>1</sup> His ancestor, Bardizbah, was a cultivator in the vicinity of Bukhara, where he was made a slave at the time of the Muslim conquest. Mughīra, the son of Bardizbah, accepted Islam on the hand of al-Yamān al-Ju'fī, the Muslim governor of Bukhara; thus he gained his freedom as well as his *nisha* as al-Ju'fī. About his son, Ibrāhīm (the grand-father of our author), we have received no information. But Ibrāhīm's son, Ismā'il (the father of our author), was a traditionist of great piety and sound reputation. He is said to have boasted at his death that in all that he possessed there was not a penny that had not been earned by honest labour.<sup>2</sup>

Ismā'il died leaving considerable fortune to his widow and two sons, Aḥmad and Muḥammad, the latter being only an infant at the time of his death. This infant child who was destined to play an important part in the development of *Hadīth* literature was endowed by nature with strong intellectual powers, although he was of weak physique. He possessed a sharp and retentive memory, great intelligence, and tenacity of purpose. He had inexhaustible energy and a great capacity for hard methodical work.

al-Bukhārī began his educational career under the guidance of his mother in his native town, Bukhara. Having finished his elementary studies at the young age of eleven, he took to the study of *Hadīth*. Within six years he mastered the knowledge of all the traditionists of his native city as well as that contained in the then available works on the subject. Then he went to Mecca with his mother and brother in order to perform the Pilgrimage. From there he started on his

(1) A detailed account of the life and work of al-Bukhārī is found in TA, TK, MFB, IS, and Sh.

(2) IS, i, 36.



journeys in search of *Hadīth*. His travels took him through a large part of the Muslim world; and he visited all the important centres of Islamic learning, staying everywhere as long as his pursuit of *Hadīth* demanded, meeting the traditionists, learning from them all the *Aḥādīth* they had related, and communicating to them his own knowledge. He did not hesitate to stay at one and the same place for many years. Nor did he hesitate to undertake more than one journey to a place if it was demanded by his literary pursuit. He stayed at Baṣra for four or five years, and in al-Ḥijāz for six years; and he travelled to Egypt twice, and to Kūfa and Baghdād times out of number.<sup>1</sup>

al-Bukhārī's *Wanderjahre* continued for about 40 years. In the year 250/864 he came to Nishāpūr, which gave him a grand reception suitable to a traditionist of established reputation and authority. Here he devoted himself to the teaching of traditions, and wanted to settle down. But he had to leave the town on account of the rivalry of Muḥammad b. Yaḥya al-Dhuhli, at the command of Khālīd b. Aḥmad al-Dhuhli whose request to deliver lectures on *Hadīth* in his palace was not accepted by al-Bukhārī. From Nishāpūr he went to Khartank, a place near Samarqand, at the request of its inhabitants. Here he settled down, and died in the year 256/870.

Throughout his life, al-Bukhārī's character was consistent, honest and amiable, which might serve as an example to the devotees of learning. He was extremely strict in the observance of his religious duties. He always lived on what he earned by means of trade, in which he was scrupulously honest. Once he lost 10,000 dirhams on account of mere scruple. He spent a good deal of his own money in helping the students and the poor. He never showed temper to any one even when there was sufficient cause for it; nor did he bear ill-will against any body. Even against Muḥammad b. Yaḥya, who had caused his exile from Nishāpūr, he did not harbour any grudge.<sup>2</sup>

(1) MFB, 564.

(2) IS, i, 44f.



*Hadīth* was al-Bukhārī's only interest. For it he spared no pains, and for it he sacrificed almost everything. On it he spent almost all that he earned. To it he devoted his whole life. On account of it he spent the largest part of his life in travelling, and in one of his travels lived on grass and herbs for three days. The only recreation he enjoyed was archery, in which he had acquired great skill. His amanuensis who lived with him for a considerable time, says that al-Bukhārī often went out shooting arrows; only twice during his stay with al-Bukhārī did this man see him miss the mark.<sup>1</sup>

Since the very beginning of his career, al-Bukhārī showed the signs of greatness as a traditionist. He pointed out a mistake of one of his teachers when he was a mere boy of eleven. The teacher laughed at the audacity of the young student. But al-Bukhārī persisted in his correction, and challenged his teacher to refer to his book which justified the contention of al-Bukhārī.<sup>2</sup> When he was still a boy without any visible signs of manhood, he was entreated by a large crowd of the students of *Hadīth* to deliver lecture on the subject. The learned youth accepted their request. A large number of the seekers of *Hadīth* flocked together in a mosque and they accepted the traditions related by him on his authority.<sup>3</sup> Once when he visited Baṣra, his arrival was notified to the people and a day was fixed for his lecture. At this lecture he narrated only such traditions as he had received on the authority of the early traditionists of this very centre of Islamic learning, and had been unknown to this audience.<sup>4</sup>

Many a time was al-Bukhārī's vast learning severely tested in various ways. He was always remarkably successful at these difficult trials. At Baghdād ten of the traditionists changed the *Isnāds* and the contents of a hundred traditions, recited them to al-Bukhārī at a public meeting, and asked him questions about them. al-Bukhārī confessed his ignorance

(1) MFB, 566.

(2) TK, ii, 4.

(3) TA, 90.

(4) TK, ii, 6.



about the traditions which they had recited. But then he narrated the correct versions of all those traditions, and said that probably his interrogators had wrongly recited what had been correctly reported by himself. At Samarqand four hundred students tested the knowledge of al-Bukhārī as the people of Bahgdād had done, for seven days; and al-Bukhārī succeeded in exposing their interpolations. At Nishāpūr, Muslim, the well-known author of another *Ṣaḥīḥ*, and others asked al-Bukhārī questions about certain traditions; and he completely satisfied them with his answers. In many an assembly of the traditionsists he successfully fixed up the identity of some of the early narrators of traditions which they had been unable to do. These repeated trials and successes of al-Bukhārī gained him recognition as the greatest traditionist of his time, by all the great authorities on the subject with whom he came in contact, e.g., Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, 'Alī b. al-Madīnī, Abū Bakr b. Abī Shayba, Ishāq b. Rāhawayh and others.<sup>1</sup>

al-Bukhārī began his career as an author when he was still a student. His long journeys and toilsome travels did not stand in his way to authorship. During his stay at Madīnah, at the age of 18 he compiled his two earliest books. One of these contained the decrees and the decisions of the Companions and the Followers; and the other, short biographies of the important narrators of traditions during his own time.<sup>2</sup> A large number of other works followed. Their list is found in the *Fihrist*, the *Muqaddimah* of Fath al-Bārī, and the *Irshād al-Sārī*.<sup>3</sup>

The most important of these works is the *Ṣaḥīḥ* which is commonly known as *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. It was read out to 90,000 students by the author himself, and it has made his name immortal. It is considered by almost all the traditionists as the most reliable book in *Ḥadīth* literature, and has been

(1) IS, i, 36ff.; MFB 568ff. TA, 87-91.

(2) T.K, ii, 5.

(3) FN, 230; MFB, 493; IS, 35.



considered by the Muslims generally as an authority next only to the Qur'ān. It is used by some Muslims as a charm to overcome their difficulties,<sup>1</sup> and the possession of its copy has been regarded as a proof against disaster.<sup>2</sup>

The *Ṣaḥīḥ* may be called al-Bukhārī's life-work. His earlier treatises served him as a preparation for this great work, and his later books were only off-shoots of it. It is to the *Ṣaḥīḥ* that he devoted his greatest care and attention, and in the actual compilation of it he spent, about one-fourth of his life.<sup>3</sup>

al-Bukhārī's idea to compile the *Ṣaḥīḥ* owed its origin to the casual remark of Ishāq b. Rāhawayh (166-238/782/852) that he wished that some of the traditionists should compile a short comprehensive book containing the genuine traditions only. These words caught the imagination of al-Bukhārī. He began to work at it with the greatest zeal, care and scruple ever shown by any author. He explored all the traditions known to him, tested their genuineness according to the canons of criticism promulgated by himself, picked up 7275 out of 600,000 of them, arranged them according to their subject-matter under separate headings generally taken from the Qur'ān and in some cases from the traditions themselves.

al-Bukhārī has nowhere mentioned what canons of criticism he applied to the traditions in order to test their genuineness; nor has he told us what were his aims in compiling this book. But many Muslim doctors have tried to infer these things by an objective study of the book itself. al-Ḥāzimī in his *Shuruṭ al-A'imma*, al-'Irāqī in his *Alfiya*, al-'Aynī and al-Qaṣṭallānī in their introductions to their commentaries on the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, and many other writers on the *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth* (e.g. Ibn Ṣalāḥ) have tried to infer the principles followed by al-Bukhārī in his selection of traditions.

(1) IS, i, 33 ff., 46.

(2) TI, 93.

(3) TA, 95; TR, 24.



As we have already seen, al-Bukhārī's main object was to collect together the genuine traditions only. By these he<sup>1</sup> meant such traditions as were handed down to him from the Prophet on the authority of a well-known Companion by a continuous chain of such narrators as according to his researches had been unanimously accepted by the honest and trustworthy traditionists as men of integrity, possessing retentive memory and firm faith, provided their narrations were not contrary to what was related by the other reliable authorities, and were free from hidden defects. al-Bukhārī included in his book the narrations of these narrators if they explicitly said that they had received the traditions from their authorities. In case their statement in this respect was ambiguous, he took care that they were proved to have met and associated with their authorities and were free from careless statements.<sup>2</sup>

From the above principles which al-Bukhārī took as his guides in the choice of his sources for the materials of his book can be seen his care about it. He employed his skill and care, however, more in connection with the principal contents of his work. About the traditions which he used as the heading of some of the chapters, and as corroboratives for the principal ones, he has very often omitted the whole or parts of their *Isnāds*, and in certain cases has relied on weak authorities.<sup>3</sup> The number of the 'suspended' and 'corroborative' traditions in the book is about 1725.<sup>4</sup>

al-Bukhārī, however, wanted not only to collect together what he considered to be genuine traditions, but also to impress their imports upon the mind of his readers, and to show them what legal inferences could be drawn from these traditions. He, therefore, divided the whole work into more than 100 books which he subdivided into 3450 chapters. Every chapter has a heading which serves as a key to the contents of the various traditions included in it.

(1) For a detailed discussion of the term 'genuine' see IS, i, 22ff.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) TR, 30.



In the choice of his materials for the *Ṣaḥīḥ* on the whole, al-Bukhārī has shown his vast knowledge of traditions as well as of the lives, character and authenticity of their narrators. By his choice of the headings for the various chapters he has shown his keen insight into the import of the traditions chosen by him, and his thorough grasp of the system of Islamic jurisprudence.

About the headings of the various chapters in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* it has been aptly remarked that in them consists the *Fiqh* of al-Bukhārī. These headings consist of verses from the Qur'ān or of passages from traditions. In some cases they are in entire agreement with the traditions under them, wherefore they serve as mere index to them. In some other cases, they are of wider or narrower significance than the traditions which follow, wherefore they serve as an additional object of interpretation and explanations of the traditions. In some cases, they are in the interrogative form. In such cases al-Bukhārī wanted to show that according to him the problem was still undecided. In some cases he wanted to warn against what might outwardly appear as wrong and impermissible. In the headings of all the chapters a certain object was kept in view by al-Bukhārī. In cases also where the headings are not followed by a tradition (which have baffled many traditionists), al-Bukhārī wanted to show that no genuine tradition on the subject was known to him.<sup>1</sup>

In the repetition of the various versions of one and the same tradition in different chapters also al-Bukhārī has struck a new path. By repeating them at different places instead of putting them together at one and the same place, he wanted to bring to light further evidence of the authenticity of the traditions (in question), and at the same time to draw more than one practical conclusion from them. Similarly, in including a part of a tradition in one chapter and inserting another part in another chapter, and in introducing the 'suspended' traditions as *Marfū'* and *Mawqūf*, al-Bukhārī has

(1) MFB, 13; IS, i, 11-12.



certain special important and scientific purposes in view, which are explained by the commentators of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* in their commentaries.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the *Ṣaḥīḥ*—being compiled by a great traditionist who combined a vast knowledge of traditions and allied subjects with scrupulous piety, strict exactitude, the painstaking accuracy of a modern editor, and the legal acumen of an astute jurist—at once attracted the attention of the whole Muslim world, gained its respectful regard, and was recognized as an authority next only to the Qur'ān. Many Muslim doctors wrote large commentaries on it in which they thoroughly discussed every aspect of the book and every work of its contents. A long list of these works is found in the *Irshād al-Sārī* of al-Qaṣṭallānī<sup>2</sup> and the *Kashf al-Zunūn* of Ḥājī Khalifa.<sup>3</sup>

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the *Ṣaḥīḥ* has no defects, or that the Muslim scholars have failed to criticise it. Thus, it is generally admitted that like other traditionists, al-Bukhārī has confined his criticism to the narrators of traditions and their reliability, and that to the probability or possibility of the truth of the matters reported by them he has paid no attention. In estimating the reliability of the narrators, his judgment has in certain cases been erroneous. The Muslim traditionists did not fail to point out these defects of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*. al-Dāraqutnī (306-385 A.H.) has tried to show the weakness of 200 traditions contained in the book (as well as that of many of their narrators) in his *al-Istidrāk w'al-Tatabbu'*<sup>4</sup> which has been summarized by al-Jazā'irī in his *Taujīh al-Nazar*.<sup>5</sup> Abū Mas'ūd of Damascus

(1) MFB, 12 f.; IS, i, 22 f.

(2) IS, i, 39-42.

(3) KZ, ii, 521-39, *et al.*

(4) KZ, ii, 545.

(5) TN, 96-113.



and Abū 'Alī al-Ghassānī have also criticised the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī,<sup>1</sup> and al-'Aynī in his commentary has shown the defects of some of its contents.<sup>2</sup>

But all the Muslim traditionists including the critics of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, and the modern Orientalists, have unanimously paid tribute to the general accuracy, scrupulous care and exactitude of the author of the book. "In his selections of *Aḥādīth*", says Brockelmann, "he has shown the greatest critical ability, and in editing the text he has sought to obtain the most scrupulous accuracy".<sup>3</sup>

### THE ṢAḤĪḤ OF MUSLIM

The position of the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* in *Hadīth* literature is not unrivalled. Another *Ṣaḥīḥ* was compiled almost simultaneously with it, and it was considered as superior to the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* by some, equal to it by many, and next to it by most of the traditionists. It is the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Abū al-Ḥusain 'Asākir al-Dīn Muslim b. Ḥajjāj b. Muslim al-Qushayrī al-Nishāpūrī.

Muslim, as his *nisba* shows, belonged to the Qushayrī tribe of the Arabs, an off-shoot of the great clan of Rabi'a. His tribe took more or less important part in the history of Islam since the death of the Prophet. Ḥayda, a Qushayrī,

(1) NSM, 8.

(2) Dr. A. Mingana published a note on a Ms. of the oldest fragments of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī in J.R.A.S. 1936 (pp. 287-292). In it he has described the special features of the Ms. and promised to publish a complete set of facsimile production of it, which has not been available for me. His suggestion, however, that the book was not composed by al-Bukhārī, but by a student of the book one or two generations after al-Bukhārī, because the word "*Akhbarānā*" is used for him and "*Haddathanā*" for the later narrators, is not warranted. For the strict use of these terms was not definitely fixed at the time of al-Bukhārī and also because in the *Risāla of Taqyīd al-'Ibām* of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī also which was certainly composed by al-Khaṭīb, the author is introduced with the term "*Akhbarānā*" and other narrators with the term "*Haddathanā*."

(3) EIs, "Bukhārī".



is mentioned in the *Iṣāba* as one of the Companions.<sup>1</sup> Qurra b. Hubayra, another Qushayrī, was made by the Prophet a *Wālī* in charge of the alms of his people.<sup>2</sup> Ziyād b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, another Qushayrī, is said to have killed 1000 non-Muslims at the battle of Yarmūk in which he lost one of his legs.<sup>3</sup>

After the vast Islamic conquests various families of the Qushayrīs together with the members of the other tribes migrated from Arabia and settled down in the various provinces, some in the west, and some in the east. Kulthūm b. 'Iyād and his nephew Balj b. Bishr who had served as governors of Africa and of Andalusia respectively settled down in a district near Cordova in Spain. Another Qushayrī family made their residence at Elvira. Some of them migrated to the East and settled down in Khurasan. Among them was one Zurāra who served as a governor of the province for some-time. His son 'Amr and grandson Ḥumayd b. 'Amr settled down at Nishāpūr.<sup>4</sup> From them probaly deccended our author, Muslim, the son of al-Ḥajjāj who was a traditionist of no mean merit.<sup>5</sup>

Very little is known about the early life of Muslim. It is said, however, that he was born in 202/817, and that having learnt and excelled in the various branches of Arabic literature at an early age, he took to the special study of *Hadīth*. In the pursuit of this subject he travelled widely, and visited all the important centres of learning in Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Egypt. He attended the lectures of most of the important traditionists of his time e.g. Ishāq b. Rāhawayh, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, 'Ubayd Allāh al-Qawāriri, Shuwayh b. Yūnus, 'Abd Allāh b. Maslama, Ḥamala b. Yaḥya and others.

(1) ITS, i, 752

(2) JA, fol. 288.

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *Ibid.*

(5) TT, x, No. 226.



Having finished his studies he settled down at Nishāpūr, earned his livelihood by means of trade, and devoted his life to the service of *Hadīth*. He died in the year 261/874 on account of taking too much of *Balādhur* (*Anacardium*), while he was busy in finding out a particular tradition.

Muslim's character is said to have been admirable. His fearless adherence to the truth is shown by his persistence in his association with al-Bukhārī while all others had deserted the latter on account of the fear of Muḥammad b. Yahya al-Duhli.<sup>1</sup> Muslim never spoke ill of any one; nor did he abuse any one during his whole life.<sup>2</sup>

Like al-Bukhārī, Muslim also devoted his whole life to the service of *Hadīth*. He wrote many books and treatises on *Hadīth* and on subjects allied to it. Ibn al-Nadīm has mentioned five of his books on biography and *Hadīth*.<sup>3</sup> Ḥajī Khalifa has added the names of many other works by him on the same subject.<sup>4</sup>

The most important of these works is his *Ṣaḥīḥ* which has been regarded in certain respects as the best work on the subject. In order to compile this book, Muslim examined 300,000 traditions<sup>5</sup> out of which he picked up only 4000 about the genuineness of which the traditionists were unanimous; and included them in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.<sup>6</sup>

Muslim considered only such traditions as genuine, as had been handed down to him by a continuous chain of reliable authorities, were in conformity with what had been related by the narrators whose reliability was unanimously accepted, and were free from hidden defects.<sup>7</sup> He has classified traditions into three groups :—

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(1) WA, No. 727.

(2) BM, 117.

(3) FN, 231.

(4) KZ, ii, 541ff. cf. NSM, 4.

(5) NSM, 5.

(6) MIS, 8-9.

(7) NSM, 5.



1. Those that were related by such narrators as had been straightforward and steadfast in their narrations, did not differ much in them from other reliable narrators, nor did they commit obvious confusion in their narrations;
2. the traditions the narrators of which were not distinguished for their retentive memory and steadfastness in narrations;
3. the traditions which were related by such narrators as were declared by the traditionists in general or by most of them to be of questionable reliability.

The first group, says Muslim, form the principal part of the contents of his book; the second group are included as corroborative of the first group, and the third are entirely rejected.<sup>1</sup>

The book on Tafsir in Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ* is neither complete nor systematic. Hence it is not considered as a *Jāmi'* like that of al-Bukhārī. But Muslim strictly observed many principles of the science of *Hadīth* which had been neglected by his great predecessor, al-Bukhārī. He differentiated between the use of the terms *Akhbaranā* and *Haddathanā*, and always used the former in connection with the traditions which had been recited to him by his teachers, and the latter in connection with what he had read out to them. He was more strict and consistent than al-Bukhārī in pointing out the differences between the narrations of the various *Rāwīs* and in stating their character and other particulars. He showed greater acumen than his predecessor in the arrangement of traditions and their *Isnāds* in his work, and in putting together, the different versions of a tradition in one place.<sup>2</sup> He did not commit any mistake or confusion in the text or *Isnād* of any tradition as his predecessor had done.<sup>3</sup> He added to his book a long intro-

(1) SM, Muqaddimah, 3ff.

(2) NSM, 5.

(3) BM, 117.



duction in which he explained some of the principles which he had followed in the choice of the materials for his book, and which should be followed in accepting and relating traditions.

Having compiled the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Muslim presented it to Abū Zar'a of Ray, a traditionist of great repute, for criticism. He cancelled all that was pointed out (by Abū Zar'a) to him to be defective, and retained only such traditions as were declared by him to be genuine.<sup>1</sup>

Carefully compiled by Muslim, and corrected by Abū Zar'a, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* has been recognized as the most authentic collection of traditions after that of al-Bukhārī, and superior to the latter in the details of its arrangement. Some traditionists held it to be superior to the work of al-Bukhārī in every respect. But Muslim himself had recognized the superiority of his predecessor. He, however, rightly claimed for his book the credit of being the basis of the future works on traditions for 200 years.<sup>2</sup>

After Muslim, some other traditionists also compiled 'genuine' traditions. These include Ibn Khuzayma (d. 311/923), Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354/965),<sup>3</sup> etc. None of them, however, ever gained the recognition and popularity which has been enjoyed by the works of al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

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(1) NSM, 8.

(2) *Ibid.*, 5.

(3) *Ibid.*, 8.



## CHAPTER V

### HADITH LITERATURE—*Contd.*

#### THE SUNAN WORKS

The *Sunan* works constitute the richest branch of *Hadīth* literature. Since the earliest period in the history of Islam, the traditionists attached more importance to the legal traditions (*Aḥādīth al-aḥkām*) and the dogmatical traditions than to the historical (*maghāzī*). According to them, the *maghāzī* were of no practical value. Whether the Prophet left Badr on the 8th of January 623 A.D. or on the 28th of March is of no practical utility to a Muslim. On the contrary, the method followed by him in his ablutions, prayers and pilgrimage or in his buying and selling things, and his commands about a marriage or the manumission of slaves, etc. should form the basis of every Muslim's practical life.

By and by, the traditionists confined their activities more and more to the study and compilation of the legal traditions only. According to them the *Maghāzī* constitute a part of the history of Islam, and properly belong to that sphere. Since the second half of the third century, therefore, most of the traditionists, except the most ambitious ones, compiled only *Sunan* works some of which are included among the most important works in *Hadīth* literature. Such are the works of Abū Dā'ūd al-Sijistānī, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā'ī, al-Dārimī, Ibn Māja, al-Dāraquṭnī, and others. The book of al-Tirmidhī is really a *Jāmi'* and includes traditions on all the various subjects; but as it is generally called a *Sunan*, it will be discussed in this chapter together with the works of the other authors mentioned above.

#### THE SUNAN OF ABŪ DĀ'ŪD AL-SIJISTĀNĪ

One of the most important of the *Sunan* works is that of Abū Dā'ūd Sulaymān b. al-Ash'athī who examined 500,000



traditions, and picked up 4,800 of them for his book on which he laboured for 20 years.<sup>1</sup>

Abū Dā'ūd, the author of this book, was a descendant of 'Imrān who belonged to the tribe of Banū Azd of Arabia, and who was killed in the battle of Šiffīn while fighting on behalf of 'Alī.<sup>2</sup> Abū Dā'ūd himself was born in 203/817. About the place of his birth the authorities differ. Ibn Khallikān<sup>3</sup> and, following him, Wüstenfeld<sup>4</sup> are of the opinion that he was born in a village called Sijistāna near Baṣra. But Yāqūt, the great geographer,<sup>5</sup> and al-Sam'ānī<sup>6</sup> and al-Subkī<sup>7</sup> are of the opinion that our author was born in the well-known town of Sijistān in Khurasan. As a matter of fact, a village named Sijistāna was never known to have existed near Baṣra.

Abū Dā'ūd received his elementary education probably in his native city. When he was ten years of age, he joined a school in Nishāpūr. There he studied with Muḥammad b. Aslam<sup>8</sup> (d. 242/856). He also studied at Khurasan before going to Baṣra<sup>9</sup> where he received the largest part of his education in *Hadīth*. He visited Kūfa in 224, and from there he started on his journeys in search of 'knowledge' in Arabia, Mesopotamia, Persia, Syria and Egypt. He met all the important traditionists of his time from whom he gathered the knowledge of all the available traditions. The names of many of these teachers are found in works on *Asmā' al-Rijāl*.

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- (1) TA, 709. Wüstenfeld (Sh, 91) doubts the accuracy of the statement that Abū Dā'ūd had been engaged on his book for 20 years.  
 (2) KAS, 293; TA, 709.  
 (3) WA, No. 271.  
 (4) Sh. No. 47.  
 (5) MBn, iii, 44.  
 (6) KAS, 293.  
 (7) TK, ii, 48.  
 (8) MBn, iii, 44.  
 (9) TA, 710.



During his travels, Abū Dā'ūd visited Baghdād many a time. Once while staying there he was visited by Abū Aḥmad al-Muwaffaq, the famous commander and brother of the caliph al-Mu'tamid. Abū Dā'ūd enquired from him the object of his visit. al-Muwaffaq said that the object of his visit was threefold: (i) to request Abū Dā'ūd to take up his residence at Baṣra which had been deserted by people on account of the insurrection of the Zanjīs, and which would attract crowds of students and would have an increase in population if Abū Dā'ūd took up his residence there; (ii) to request Abū Dā'ūd to deliver lectures on traditions to al-Muwaffaq's sons; and (iii) to ask Abū Dā'ūd to hold special classes for this purpose, to which the common students might not be admitted. Abū Dā'ūd accepted the first two requests, but expressed his inability to accede to the third. For "to knowledge all are equal", and Abū Dā'ūd would not make any distinction between the poor and the rich students. The sons of al-Muwaffaq, therefore, attended (according to the report of Jābir) the lectures of Abū Dā'ūd together with the other students.<sup>1</sup>

This story related by al-Subkī throws light not only on the great reputation enjoyed by Abū Dā'ūd as a traditionist and on his character as a teacher, but also on the date of his final settlement at Baṣra. This could not have happened before the year 270, when the Zanjī insurrection was finally crushed. Abū Dā'ūd died at Baṣra in the year 275/888 at the age of 73.

Abū Dā'ūd's vast knowledge of traditions, his upright character and his piety have been generally recognized by all the traditionists.<sup>2</sup>

Abū Dā'ūd wrote many books on traditions and the Islamic law.<sup>3</sup> The most important of them is the *Sunan* which has been taken to be the first book of its type in *Ḥadīth*

(1) TK, ii, 49.

(2) TA, 710.

(3) Sh, 93; KZ, iii, 622ff.



literature, has been recognized as the best *Sunan* work, and has been included in the most reliable collections of *Hadīth*. It has been divided into various books which are subdivided into different chapters.

Abū Dā'ūd kept up the scrupulous exactitude of his predecessors in reproducing the traditions which he had collected. But he differed from them in the standard of his choice. He included in his *Sunan* not only the 'genuine' traditions (as al-Bukhārī and Muslim had done), but also such of them as had been pronounced by some traditionists as weak and doubtful. Among the narrators he relied not only on those who had been declared by all the authorities unanimously as acceptable, but also on those who have been accepted only by some critics as reliable. For some of the critics like Shu'ba and others had been over-strict in their criticism of the narrators.<sup>1</sup> Abū Dā'ūd collected, however, in every chapter the most reliable traditions known to him on the subject. He gave the various sources through which he had received traditions, and also stated the various versions of the various traditions. He pointed out the defects of the defective traditions as well as the relative value of different versions of them. In the case of the traditions which he believed to be genuine, however, he made no remarks whatsoever. Of the long traditions he has given only such parts as were relevant to the chapter in which they are included<sup>2</sup>

The following remarks made by Abū Dā'ūd in connection with some of the traditions give us a general idea of the method and of the nature of his criticism :—

"Abū Dā'ūd says: This is an inauthentic (*munkar*) *Hadīth*. Certainly, it is related by Ibn Jurayj from Ziyād b. Sa'd, from al Zuhri, from Anas, that he said that the Prophet (may peace be on him) had put on a ring made of (palm) leaf, which after some time he threw away. The mistake in the *Hadīth* is due to Humām. No other narrator has related it."<sup>3</sup>

(1) MSt, ii, 250.

(2) Abd Dā'ūd's *Risālah* to the people of Mecca cited in TT,

(3) SAD, i, 4.



About another *Hadith* he says :—

“It has been related by Ibn Wahb only. A similar *Hadith* has, however, been related by Mu‘qil b. ‘Ubayd Allāh through a chain of narrators.”<sup>1</sup>

In connection with another *Hadith*, after giving two versions of it, he says :—

“The one related by Anas is more correct than the other.”<sup>2</sup>

At another place, he points out that only the traditionists of Egypt have given an *Isnād* for it.<sup>3</sup> In connection with another *Hadith*, he adds a note about one of its narrators, Abū Ishāq, that he had learnt only four traditions from al-Ḥārith, and that the present *Hadith* related by him on the authority of al-Ḥārith was not one of them.<sup>4</sup> About the narrators of another *Hadith* he says :—

“Abū Khalil never heard any *Hadith* from Qatāda”.<sup>5</sup> In connection with another *Hadith* he says :—

“This *Hadith* has been handed down by several chains of authorities. All of them are inauthentic”.<sup>6</sup>

About another *Hadith* he says :—

“This *Hadith* has continuous chains of authorities”.<sup>7</sup>

Containing all the legal traditions which may serve as foundation for Islamic rituals and law, and explicit on the value and reliability of those traditions, Abū Dā‘ūd’s book has generally been accepted as the most important *Sunan* work. “The *Kitāb al-Sunan* of Abū Dā‘ūd”, says al-Khaṭṭābī, “is a noble book. No book like it has ever been written on

(1) SAD. i, 26.

(2) *Ibid.* 32-33.

(3) *Ibid.* 133-134.

(4) *Ibid.* 138.

(5) \* *Ibid.* 162.

(6) *Ibid.* i, 221.

(7) *Ibid.*



theology". Abū Dā'ūd has collected in this book such traditions as no one before or after him ever compiled together. It has been accepted, therefore, as a standard work on traditions by theologians of various schools in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Maghrib and in many other parts of the world—in spite of their following different schools of Islamic law.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE JĀMI' OF AL-TIRMIDHĪ

The general principles with regard to the criticism of *Hadīth* which had been adopted by Abū Dā'ūd in his collection of *Sunan* were further improved upon and followed by his student, Abū 'īsā Muḥammad b. 'īsā in his *Jāmi'*. This latter work contains all such traditions—legal, dogmatical and historical—as had been accepted by the Muslim jurists of one school or another, as the basis of Islamic law.

Abū 'īsā Muḥammad b. 'īsā was born at Mecca in the year 206/821. He travelled a good deal in order to learn traditions, visited the various centres of Islamic learning in Arabia, Mesopotamia, Persia and Khurasan, and associated with the eminent traditionists of his time e.g., al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dā'ūd and others. He died at Tirmidh in 279/892.

Abū 'īsā possessed an extremely sharp and retentive memory which was severely tested many times. It is related that once during his travels, a traditionist dictated to him several traditions which occupied 16 pages. These pages were lost by al-Tirmidhī before he could revise them. He met the traditionist again after some time, and requested him to recite some traditions. The teacher suggested that he would read out from his manuscript the same traditions as he had dictated to al-Tirmidhī at the previous meeting, and that al-Tirmidhī should compare his notes with what he heard. al-Tirmidhī instead of telling the teacher that he had lost his notes, took up some blank papers in his hand, and looked into them as if they contained his notes, and the teacher

(1) TA, 711-12.



began to read his book. The latter soon discovered the trick, and got angry at the young student's conduct. But al-Tirmidhī explained the position, and said that he remembered every word of what had been dictated to him. The teacher refused to believe him, and challenged him to recite the traditions from his memory. al-Tirmidhī accepted the challenge at once, and recited all the traditions without committing a single mistake. Now the teacher doubted his statement that he had not revised his notes. In order to test this, he recited forty other traditions, and asked al-Tirmidhī to reproduce them. al-Tirmidhī at once repeated what he had heard from his teacher, who was now convinced of the truth of his statement, and was impressed by his unfailing memory.

al-Tirmidhī's character is said to have been excellent; his piety and fear of God was unsurpassed.

Tirmidhī's *Jāmi'* has been recognized as one of the most important works in *Ḥadīth* literature, and has been unanimously included in the six canonical collections of *Ḥadīth*. The author of this great *Jāmi'* for the first time, took into consideration only those traditions on which had already been based the various rituals and laws of Islam by the Muslim doctors of the various schools. He took pains to determine the identity, the names, the titles and the *kunya* of the narrators of these traditions. He tried to fix the degree of the reliability of traditions, and explained what use had been made of them by the jurists of the various schools of Islamic law.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, al-Tirmidhī adds a note almost to every *Ḥadīth* with the words: "Abū 'Isā says". Then he states various important and interesting points connected with the tradition. The following examples will show the nature and the importance of al-Tirmidhī's notes:—

1. "It was related to us by Abū Kurayb who related it from 'Abda b. Sulaymān from Muḥammad b. 'Amr, from Abū Salma from Abū Hurayra, who said that the Prophet (may peace be upon him) said that but for causing

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(1) BM, 121.



hardship to his people, he would have ordered them to rub their teeth with a brush at the time of every prayer. Abū 'Īsa says: Verily, this *Hadīth* has been related by Muḥammad b. Ishāq from Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, from Abū Salma, from Zayd b. Khālīd, from the Prophet (peace be on him). And to me both the traditions of Abū Salma from Abū Hurayra and Zayd b. Khālīd from the Prophet are genuine, because verily it has been related from Abū Hurayra from the Prophet through more than one chain of authorities. But Muḥammad thinks that the tradition of Abū Salma from Zayd b. Khalid is the most correct. On the subject there are (traditions) related by Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq, 'Alī, 'Ā'ishah, Khālīd, Anas, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr, Umm Ḥabība and Ibn 'Umar'.<sup>1</sup>

2. "Qutayba and Hannād and Abū Kurayb and Aḥmad b. Manī' and Maḥmūd b. Ghaylān and Abū 'Ammār have related to us saying that Wakī' related to them from A'mash, from Ḥabīb b. Abī Thābit, from 'Urwa, from 'Ā'ishah that the Prophet (peace be on him) kissed some of his wives and then went out for offering prayers without performing ablutions. 'Urwa said to 'A'ishah: 'Who could this be but yourself? 'A'ishah laughed. Abū 'Īsa says: A similar tradition has been related by many of those who possessed knowledge among the Companions and the Followers, and this is the opinion of Sufyān al-Thaurī and of the Jurists of Kūfa. They say that a kiss does not vitiate the ablutions. And Mālik b. Anas and al-Auzā'i and Shāfi'i and Aḥmad (b. Ḥanbal) and Ishāq (b. Rāḥawayh) say that a kiss cancels the ablutions, which is the opinion of many of those who possessed knowledge among the Companions and the Followers. Verily, our people (i.e. Mālik, Aḥmad, etc.) did not follow the tradition related by 'A'ishah from the Prophet (peace be on him), because it did not appear to be genuine to them on account of its *Isnād*. I heard Abū Bakr al-'Aṭṭār of Baṣra quote 'Alī b. al-Madīnī who said that Yahya b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān declared this tradition as weak and said that it was like nothing (i.e.

(1) JT, i, 5.



extremely weak). I heard Muḥammad b. Ismā'il also call it a weak tradition, saying that Ḥabīb b. Abī Thābit never received any tradition from 'Urwa. Ibrāhīm al-Taymī also related from 'A'ishah that the Prophet (peace be on him) kissed her and did not perform ablutions afterwards. But this also is not genuine, because Ibrāhīm al-Taymī is not known to have received this tradition from 'A'ishah. As a matter of fact, nothing that has been received from the Prophet on this subject can be called 'genuine'."<sup>1</sup>

3. "Aḥmad b. Muḥammad related to us (saying that) 'Abd Allāh related to us from Fuḍayl b. Ghazwān from Ibn Abū Nu'aym from Abū Hurayra who said that Abū al-Qāsim (i.e. the Prophet), the Prophet of Forgiveness (peace be on him), said that he who accused his slave falsely, while in fact the slave was free from what had been said about him, would be punished on the Day of Judgment—except in case it should be as the master asserted. This is a fair genuine tradition. And on the subject, traditions are related by Suwayd b. Muqarrin and 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar. As for Ibn Abū Nu'aym, he is 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abū Nu'aym whose *kunya* is Abū al-Ḥakam".<sup>2</sup>

These three examples should suffice to show the nature of the remarks made by al-Tirmidhī on the traditions included in his *Jāmi'*. He described the traditions, however, as *Ṣaḥīḥ* (genuine), *Ḥasan* (fair), *Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥasan* (genuine-fair), *Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ* (fair-genuine), *Gharīb* (rare), *Da'īf* (weak), *Munkar* (undetermined), etc. The most important feature of the *Jāmi'*—so far as the determination of the relative value of reliability of traditions is concerned—is the description of (some) traditions as *Ḥasan* (fair).

To this class belong most of the traditions on which a large part of the rituals and laws of Islam are based. The term had been already used by Aḥmad b. Ḥansal, al-Bukhārī

(1) JTJ, i, 13.

(2) *Ibid.* ii, 16.



and others<sup>1</sup>—but sparingly, and probably in a loose sense. al-Tirmidhī realized the importance of these *Aḥādīth* as a source of Islamic law, defined the term for the first time in the *Kitāb al-ʿIlal* of his *Jāmiʿ*, and applied it to those traditions which fulfilled its requirements.

al-Tirmidhī has defined a *Ḥasan* tradition as one that has been related by such narrators as are not accused of falsehood, provided it is handed down by more than one chain of authorities, and is not contrary to what has been related by other reliable narrators in general. Such traditions cannot be called genuine, because their genuineness according to the traditional canons has not been proved. It would be equally wrong to declare them to be entirely unreliable, because neither the character of their narrators warrants such a judgment, nor can it be justified by a comparison with the traditions which have been handed down by reliable authorities in general. Their reliability or unreliability depends on the nature of the particular traditions and the character of their narrators, and must therefore, be different in different cases. Some of these traditions may be nearly, though not exactly, as reliable as the genuine traditions. Some may be almost, though not quite, as unreliable as traditions related by unknown narrators.

In order to determine this class of traditions and the degree of its reliability, al-Tirmidhī described some of them as *Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥasan*, some as *Ḥasan*, and some as *Ḥasan Gharīb*. But he has not been quite consistent in his use of the term *Ḥasan*, on account of which many traditionists have criticised him. Efforts have been made to explain his inconsistency, in various ways.<sup>2</sup> But none of them can satisfy a modern minute critic. The *Jāmiʿ* of al-Tirmidhī, however, in its general scientific form, and the nature of its criticism, has been accepted by the traditionists as a unique work in *Ḥadīth* literature.

(1) MIS, 14-15.

(2) MIS, 14 ff.; TR, 53-54.



## THE SUNAN OF AL-NASĀ'Ī

Another important *Sunan* work is that compiled by Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad b. Shu'ayb al-Nasā'ī who was born in the year 214 or 215 A.H. (6 or 7 years after al-Tirmidhī) at Nasā', a town in Khurasan. Having received his early education in his own province, he went at the age of 15 to Balkh, where he studied traditions with Qutayba b. Sa'id for more than a year.<sup>1</sup> He travelled widely in pursuit of *Ḥadīth*, and settled down in Egypt when one of his teachers, Yūnus b. 'Abd al-'Alā', was still living. In the year 302/914 he went to Damascus. Here he found the inhabitants holding erroneous views against 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib—under the influence of the Umayyads. In order to guide the people to the right course, he composed a book on the merits of 'Alī, and wanted to read it out from the pulpit of a mosque. The people, instead of giving him a patient hearing, ill-treated him, kicked him, and drove him out of the mosque. He was seriously injured, and could not live long after this incident. He died in the year 303/915.<sup>2</sup>

Nasā'ī was recognized as the best traditionist of his time. 'Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, and some other important traditionists selected him unanimously as the best of all the teachers of *Ḥadīth* at the time, and 'Alī b. 'Umar declared him many a time as the foremost traditionist of his age.<sup>3</sup> His care about traditions is evident from the fact that in connection with the traditions related by al-Ḥārith he (Nasā'ī) never used the term *Ḥaddathanā* or *Akhbaranā* as he did in the case of those traditions which had been related to him by other teachers. Nasā'ī points out that the traditions he had to relate from al-Ḥārith were read by the latter within his (Nasā'ī's) hearing. Nasā'ī himself was not allowed to attend the lectures of al-Ḥārith, and therefore had to hear them by hiding himself at the gate of the lecture room.

(1) TK, ii, 83-84; WA, No. 28.

(2) Sh, 70.

(3) TdH, ii, 268.



In his large work on *Sunan* (which he confessed to have contained a good many weak and doubtful traditions), al-Nasā'ī compiled the legal traditions which he considered to be either fairly reliable or of possible reliability. At the request of some of his friends, he also compiled out of the *Sunan* a smaller work which is called *al-Mujtana*, or *al-Sunan al-Ṣughra*. al-Nasā'ī claimed that this smaller work contained only reliable traditions. It is accepted as one of the six canonical collections<sup>1</sup>

In this book, al-Nasā'ī entirely ignored the point of view of his senior contemporary, al-Tirmidhī—viz. the question of the application of traditions to various problems, that might have been made by the different schools of the Muslim jurists. al-Nasā'ī's main object was only to establish the text of traditions and the differences between their various versions—almost all of which he quotes *in extenso*, instead of only referring to them as Abū Dā'ūd and al-Tirmidhī had done. In many places, he gives headings to the differences between the various narrators, and mentions the least differences among their narrations (which is described by Goldziher as 'pettifogging').<sup>2</sup> But this 'pettifogging' is of great importance to the exactitude of a traditionist, and is not limited to the chapters on rituals only (as Goldziher says), but abounds also in other chapters. In some cases, after giving the various versions of a *Hadīth*, al-Nasā'ī points out some of them to be incorrect, and some to be correct. In the choice of his authorities, he had been strict. As a matter of fact, it is said that his canons of criticism of the narrators were more strict than those of Muslim.<sup>3</sup> The book, however, contains many weak and doubtful traditions related by unknown narrators of doubtful veracity.<sup>4</sup>

#### THE SUNAN OF AL-DĀRIMĪ (181-255/797-868)

Another important *Sunan* work is that of al-Dārimī. It is the earliest *Sunan* work received by us. An old manuscript

(1) TK, ii, 84.

(2) MSt, ii, 252.

(3) TdH, ii, 268.

(4) KZ, iii, 626-27.



copy of the book was brought from Mecca, and lithographed and published in India at the instance of Nawwāb Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān of Bhopal, a great patron of *Ḥadīth* learning in the last century.

The author of the *Sunan*, Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, descended from the Arabian tribe of Banū Dārim, an off-shoot of the great clan of Banū Tamīm,<sup>1</sup> to which he belonged probably by *muwālāt*. He was born in the year 181/797. He travelled a good deal in pursuit of traditions, and studied them with important traditionists of his time—e.g. Yazīd b. Hārūn, Sa'īd b. 'Āmir, and others. Dārimī was marked for his interest in traditions and for his veracity and piety. The keenness of his intellect, and his wide knowledge, were generally recognized. His contentment and religiousness were proverbial. He was offered the post of a judge at Samarqand. But he did not accept it until he was pressed hard to do so. Having accepted the post, he resigned it just after deciding one case only.<sup>2</sup> He died in the year 255/868.<sup>3</sup>

*Sunan al-Dārimī* has been described by some important traditionists as a *Musnad* work.<sup>4</sup> This is obviously a mistake—unless the term be used in its general sense. Some traditionists call it a *ṣaḥīḥ* (a collection of genuine traditions). But this also is a mistake; for the book contains many traditions which do not satisfy the conditions necessary for genuine traditions.

The *Sunan* contains 3,550 traditions, which are arranged in 1,408 chapters according to their contents.<sup>5</sup> One of the special features of the book is its general introductory chapter in which the compiler has collected together (in various chapters) traditions connected with certain practices of the

(1) SD, ed. intro. 6.

(2) KAS, 218b; TdH, ii, 115-17.

(3) JTKh, ii, 341.

(4) MIS, p. 15.

(5) SD, ed. intro., p. 7; BM, 48.



Arabs before Islam; traditions connected with the life and the character of the Prophet; traditions connected with the writing down of traditions, and traditions about the high place of knowledge, etc. In the general plan of the body of the book, al-Dārimī has followed the same system as had been followed by later compilers of *Sunan* works. In the body of the book, after some traditions the compiler adds notes in some of which he gives his own opinion on certain problems, or identifies some narrators, or criticises their character, or points out the difference between their versions of a tradition. But such notes in the book are very few and too short in comparison with those in the works which have been discussed above.

The book is generally accepted as reliable,<sup>1</sup> and has been pronounced by some traditionists as the sixth of the canonical collections.<sup>2</sup> But it never attained the position of any of the first three works, because it contains more weak and defective traditions than they do.<sup>3</sup>

#### THE SUNAN OF IBN MĀJA

Most of the traditionists prefer the *Sunan* of Ibn Māja to that of al-Dārimī, and include it among the most reliable works in *Hadīth*, instead of the latter. The compiler of this work, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Yazīd, (generally known as Ibn Māja which was the title of his father or grand father) was born at Qazwīn in the year 209 A.H. He visited the important centres of learning in Persia, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Syria and Egypt, and learnt traditions with well-known traditionists of his time. He compiled several works in *Hadīth* of which the most important is the *Sunan*. In this work, Ibn Māja collected together 4000 traditions in 32 books in 1500 chapters. It is reported that having compiled the book, Ibn Māja presented it for criticism to Abū Zar'a, the best critic of *Hadīth* at the time. Abū Zar'a liked the general plan of the work as well as the

(1) MIS, 15.

(2) MAA, Intro.

(3) KZ, v, 540.



arrangement of the material, and remarked that he expected that this work would supersede the *Ḥadīth* works which had been in general use. He also said that the number of the weak traditions in the book was not large (more than 30).<sup>1</sup>

But the book contains a good many traditions which have been declared by authorities on the subject, as forged ones. Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq of Delhi says that the traditions about Qazwīn (a town in Persia to which Ibn Māja belonged) are forged ones.<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Jauzī has declared in his work on *Mawḍū'āt* that all the traditions on the merits of individuals or tribes or towns are forged ones. And many such traditions are found in *Sunan Ibn Māja*.

#### THE SUNAN OF AL-DĀRAQUTNĪ (306-385-A.H.)

Another *Sunan* work of some importance was compiled by Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. 'Umar, generally known as al-Dāraqutnī (on account of his residence in the quarter called Dār Quṭn in Baghdad).

al-Dāraqutnī was born in the year 306/918. He learnt and excelled in Arabic literature and various Islamic sciences—specially, Traditions and the Readings (*qira'a*) of the Qur'ān. His book on the latter subject has been acknowledged as the first work of its type the general plan of which has been followed by all the later authors. His knowledge of the Arabic language was recognized by the authorities on the subject during his own life-time. His wide knowledge of traditions, their narrators and the narrators' character had been admitted by his contemporaries as well as by his successors.<sup>3</sup> Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad (generally known as al-Ḥākim) of Nishāpūr, the great critic of traditions, Abū Nu'aym Aḥmad of Isfahan (whose *Hilyat al-Auliya'* is said to be the best work

(1) TdH, ii, 209 ff.

(2) MAA, intro.

(3) TB, xii, 34-40.



on the biography of the saints),<sup>1</sup> Tammām of Ray (the author of the *Fawā'id*), and 'Abd al-Ghanī b. Sa'id, the traditionist, were students of Dāraqutnī and recognized his wide critical knowledge of *Hadīth*.

al-Hākim who narrated traditions from about 2,000 traditionists<sup>2</sup> remarked that he never had met a traditionist like Dāraqutnī. For whenever any subject was discussed with him (Dāraqutnī), he showed wide knowledge of it.<sup>3</sup>

al-Dāraqutnī was specially interested in traditions on which subject he was taken as the best authority in his time. Every traditionist who visited Baghdad made it a point to see him, and acknowledged his greatness. Abū Manṣūr b. al-Karkhī, while compiling his *Musnad*, depended upon Dāraqutnī's help in determining the defective traditions; and on the notes which were dictated by Dāraqutnī to Abū Manṣur, Abū Bakr al-Barqānī has based his work on traditions.<sup>4</sup> He also rendered material help in the compilation of a *Musnad* work to Ibn Hinzāba, the able and learned minister of the Ikhshīdīd rulers of Egypt. Having learnt that the *Musnad* was being compiled, Dāraqutnī travelled from Baghdad to Egypt and stayed there till the work was completed. Throughout this period Ibn Hinzāba showed him great respect and regard, and at the end bestowed upon him rich rewards.<sup>5</sup>

Dāraqutnī himself composed many useful works on *Hadīth* and connected subjects. A list of them is given by Wūstenfeld in his work on the Shāfi'is.<sup>6</sup> The most important of these works for our purpose is the *Sunan* which was recognized as one of the reliable compilations of *Hadīth*—next in importance to the six canonical collections. It was used by al-Baghawī

(1) WA, No. 32.

(2) *Ibid.* No. 626.

(3) *Ibid.* p. 38.

(4) *Ibid.*

(5) *Ibid.* Nos. 132, 445.

(6) Sh, No. 235.



(d. 516 A.H.) as one of the chief sources for his *Maṣābiḥ al-Sunnah*.<sup>1</sup>

Dāraqutnī has collected together in his *Sunan* such traditions as he considered to be fairly reliable, and he has given their various *Isnāds* and different versions. Of the very first *Hadīth*, for example, he has given 5 different versions, with 54 different chains of authorities, some of which he has declared as weak (BM, 48). He adds to certain traditions some notes in which he tries to fix their degree of reliability and the identity of some of their narrators, and criticises their character and reliability. The number of weak traditions in his *Sunan*, however, is fairly large. It is at any rate larger than in any of the *Sunan* works included in the canonical collections; and therefore it has not been included among them.

#### THE SUNAN OF AL-BAYHAQĪ (384-458/994-1065)

After Dāraqutnī another *Sunan* was compiled by Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn of Bayhaq, a group of villages near Nishāpūr. al-Bayhaqī was born in the year 384. He studied traditions with more than 100 eminent traditionists of his time—including Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥākim, one of the greatest traditionists of the time, of whom al-Bayhaqī was the most eminent pupil. Having excelled in the various Islamic sciences, al-Bayhaqī began his career as an author, and composed a large number of works on traditions and on the Shāfi‘ī system of Muhammadan law. Some of these works are said to be unparalleled in the history of Arabic literature.<sup>2</sup> al-Bayhaqī’s reputation as a traditionist and a jurist attracted the attention of the Muslim scholars of Nishāpūr, who invited him to their town and requested him to read one of his books with them. They recognized his greatness when their request had been granted by him.<sup>3</sup> He died in the year 458/1065.

(1) MSn, 2.

(2) TK, iii, 4.

(3) *Ibid.* 3-5.



al-Bayhaqī was a prolific writer. It is said that he composed about 1000 books and treatises. Among them his two *Sunan* works are well known. It is said that they are unique in their general plan and the method of treatment.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE SUNAN OF SA'ID B. MANŠŪR (D. 227/841)

Earlier than all the *Sunan* works mentioned above is that of Abū 'Uthmān Sa'id b. Manšūr b. Shu'ba. He was born at Merv, and was brought up at Balkh. He wandered through a large part of the Islamic world, and at last settled down in Mecca where he died in the year 227/841.

He learnt traditions with prominent traditionists like Mālik, Hammād, Abū 'Awāna and others; and from them he related *Aḥādīth* to such traditionists as gained great reputation at a later period—e.g. Muslim, Abū Dā'ūd and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal who had respect and regard for Sa'id b. Manšūr.<sup>2</sup>

He compiled his *Sunan* about the end of his life, and is said to have had great confidence in his work.<sup>3</sup> The *Sunan* is said to have contained a large number of such traditions as had been received by him from Muḥammad through three mediums<sup>4</sup> only.

#### THE SUNAN OF ABŪ MUSLĪM AL-KASHSHĪ (D. 282/895)

Another of the early *Sunan* works is that of Abū Muslim Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd Allāh al-Kashshī. His *nisba* has been variously explained i.e. by reference to his forefathers, or his place of residence (a village called Kashsh in the province of Khuzistan).<sup>5</sup> The latter explanation seems to be supported by the fact that he took a prominent part in the battles which were fought near Khuzistan.

(1) KZ, iii, 627.

(2) TdH, ii, 5.

(3) TT, iii, No. 148.

(4) TdH, ii, 5; BM, 51.

(5) KAS, sub nom.



He learnt traditions with eminent traditionists of his time like Abū 'Āṣim al-Nabīl, Abū 'Awāna and others.

He visited Baghdad where he delivered some lectures on traditions. His fame and reputation attracted an incredibly large number of students. His voice could not reach all of them. Seven persons, therefore, were appointed to reproduce his lectures to such of his audience as could not hear him. After he finished his lectures and the crowd cleared up, the place occupied by them was measured and the ink-pots left by such of them as had brought them with themselves in order to take notes from his lectures were counted, and thus the number of the audience was estimated to have been more than 40,000. Abū Muslim died in the year 282. A.H.<sup>1</sup>

Abū Muslim devoted his best effort and attention to his *Sunan* which is said to have contained many such traditions as had been received by him from the Prophet, through three narrators only<sup>2</sup>

Many other *Sunan* works had been compiled by the different traditionists, but few of them acquired any importance or recognition in the Muslim world.

### THE MU'JAM WORKS

Though the *Mu'jam* works never acquired the importance of the *Sunan* works in *Hadīth* literature, yet many of them were compiled side by side with the *Musnads* and the *Sunans*. The best known of them are the *Mu'jams* of Abū al-Qāsim Sulaymān b. Aḥmad b. Aiyūb al-Ṭabarānī who is generally known by his *nisba*.

al-Ṭabarānī was born at Tiberias in 260/873. He travelled in pursuit of traditions through a large part of the Islamic world, and visited all the important centres of *Hadīth* learning in Syria, Egypt, Arabia, Mesopotamia and Persia. He learnt traditions from 1000 traditionists of his time. Having

(1) TdH, ii, 195.

(2) TB, vi, 122.



completed his studies, he settled down at Isfahan in 290/902, where a pension was fixed for him.<sup>1</sup> He lived for 70 years, teaching *Hadith* to students and compiling various works on the subject. He died in the year 360/970 at the age of 100 years.

His wide learning of traditions and his pious, reliable character as their narrator has been generally recognized.<sup>2</sup>

Of his works, a list of which is found in the *Tadhkirat al-Huffāz*,<sup>3</sup> the most important are the three *Mu'jams*. The largest of them, commonly known as *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, is really a *Musnad* work.<sup>4</sup> It contains about 25,000 traditions which have been collected together under the names of the various Companions by whom they are narrated, the names being arranged in alphabetical order. The medium (*awsaf*) *Mu'jam* of Tabarānī is also a large work divided into 6 volumes. It contains the rare traditions narrated to the compiler by his teachers whose names together with their traditions are given in alphabetical order. The author took pride in this work which shows his wide knowledge of the subject. But it contains many weak traditions. The smallest of Tabarānī's *Mu'jam* works is known as *al-Mu'jam al-Ṣaghīr* and has been lithographed at Delhi. This book is, according to the compiler's own statement, his first *Mu'jam* and contains only one tradition related by each of his teachers.<sup>5</sup> But we find that about the end of the book the compiler has given two or three traditions with the same *Isnād*.<sup>6</sup>

Many other *Mu'jam* works had been compiled before and after those of al-Ṭabarānī. Some of them are mentioned by Ḥājī Khalifa.<sup>7</sup>

(1) TdH, iii, 129.

(2) KAS, 366a; MBn, iii, 511-12.

(3) TdH, iii, 127-28.

(4) KZ, v, 629.

(5) MSg, 1.

(6) *Ibid.* 183, 240, 241, 248, etc.

(7) KZ, v, 623-30.



### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE VARIOUS WORKS IN HADĪTH-LITERATURE

The works in *Hadīth* literature have been classified by the traditionists into four categories according to their reliability and importance. To the first category belong those works which are considered as the most reliable. These are (i) the *Muwatṭā* of Mālik, (ii) *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, and (iii) *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.<sup>1</sup> The latter two works include almost all the traditions contained in the *Muwatṭā*, on account of which most of the important traditionists did not include it in the six canonical collections. These three books have been generally accepted as authentic since the life-time of their authors. The *Muwatṭā* was declared by al-Shāfi'ī as the most authentic book after the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup> The *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* was, as has already been said received by 90,000 students from the author himself, and was accepted as reliable by important traditionists of his time—e.g. Abū al-Ḥasan b. al-Qaṭṭān<sup>3</sup> and others<sup>4</sup>. The *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim also did not take long to receive the general recognition of the traditionists.

To the second category belong the four *Sunan* works which together with the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* are known as *al-Kutub al-Sitta*. The tendency to associate some of the *Sunan* works with the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* appears, as Goldziher has shown<sup>5</sup> to have begun about the middle of the fourth century when Sa'īd b. al-Sakan (one of the distinguished traditionists who died in 353/964 in Egypt, and whose *Muṣannaf* was recognized a century after his death by Ibn Ḥazm as one of the best collections of *Hadīth*) had once declared that the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim and the two *Sunans* of Abū Dā'ūd and al-Nasā'ī were the foundations of Islam. After some time the *Jāmi'* of al-Tirmidhī was added to the above four books and the

(1) HB, i, 132-34.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) MIS, 8.

(4) FM, 16.

(5) MSt, ii, 262.



five books together were given the distinguished title of *al-Uṣūl al-Khamṣa*.<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to determine when the *Jāmi'* of al-Tirmidhī received the recognition of the traditionists in general. Ibn Ḥazm whose list of reliable works in *Hadīth* we have received<sup>2</sup> made some criticism against the book, because it contained traditions related by al-Maṣlūb and al-Kalbī.<sup>3</sup> But it is probable that the general recognition of Tirmidhī's *Jāmi'* preceded that of the work of Ibn Māja which was added to the five books (raising the number of the canonical collections to six) for the first time by Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir who died in the beginning of the sixth century (505/1113). But as Goldziher has pointed out, throughout the sixth century the pride of place was denied by the traditionists to the *Sunan* of Ibn Māja. Razīn b. Mu'āwīya (d. 535/1140) in his Compendium of the Six Books (*Tajrīd al-Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sitta*), Ibn al-Kharrāṭ (d. 581/1185) and al-Ḥāzīmī (d. 584/1184) did not recognize the *Sunan* of Ibn Māja as a canonical collection. It was just a century after Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir that the book was again recognized as one of the six collections of *Hadīth* by 'Abd al-Ghanī (d. 600/1203) in his *al-Kamāl fī Ma'rifat al-Rijāl*, by Ibn al-Najjār (d. 643/1245) in his *Rijāl al-Kutub al-Sitta*, by Ibn Taymīya (d. 652/1254) in his *al-Muntaqā* (which was based on the six books including the *Sunan* of Ibn Māja), by Najīb al-Dīn b. Ṣayqal (d. 672/1273) in his collection of traditions, by Shams al-Dīn al-Jazarī (d. 711/1311) in his work on the subject, and by al-Mizzī (d. 742/1341) in his *Aṭrāf*. It may, therefore, be assumed (as Goldziher suggests) that from the seventh century the six books had been generally recognized by the whole world of Islam as the reliable collections of *Hadīth*.<sup>4</sup>

But within these six books if the position of the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* was always supreme and unparalleled, the place of the *Sunan*

(1) TR, 29.

(2) *Ibid.* 32.

(3) *Ibid.* 56.

(4) MSt, ii, 262-63.



of Ibn Māja always remained doubtful. Abū 'Umar 'Uthmān b. Ṣalāḥ (d. 643/1245) and following him al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277) and also Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1405) recognized only five books, and excluded the *Sunan* of Ibn Māja from the category of the generally accepted books.<sup>1</sup> Ibn al-Athīr al-Jazrī<sup>2</sup> (d. 630/1234), Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq of Delhi,<sup>3</sup> and others replaced it either by the *Muwatṭā* or the *Sunan* of al-Dārimī. The other works included in the six best works have been accepted by all the important Muslim doctors of both the East and the West as the most authentic works and were included in the various selections of the best ten works in *Hadīth*.

The main principles which guided the traditionists in giving preference to these six works appear to be the facts :—

- (i) that their compilers laid down certain principles of the criticism and selection of *Hadīth* for their collections;
- (ii) that the principal parts of their contents consisted of genuine or fair traditions, and such of them as were weak were either stated to be so, or were negligible in number;
- (iii) that the authorities on the subject had examined in detail the value of the various traditions, discussed the reliability of their narrators, and explained the rare *aḥādīth* contained in them so that the merit as well as the demerit of the works and the reliability or the unreliability of their contents had been discussed and made known; and
- (iv) that the traditionists in general having examined them thoroughly, accepted them as reliable and used them as foundations for establishing legal principles and theological inferences.

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(1) MSt, loc. cit.

(2) *Ibid.* ii, 264-65.

(3) *Ibid.* 265-67.



To the third category belong such *Musnads*, *Muṣannafs* and other collections as had been compiled before or after the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, contained reliable as well as unreliable traditions, and had not been thoroughly examined by the traditionists nor largely used by the jurists. Such are the *Musnads* of 'Abd b. Ḥumayd and of Abū Dā'ūd al-Ṭayālīsī, and the *Muṣannaf* works of 'Abd al-Razzāq, of Abū Bakr b. Abī Shayba and others.

To the fourth category belong the collections of *aḥādīth* made, by such compilers as collected together during a later period such traditions as were not found in the works of the early compilers, and included in their collections a large number of forged traditions. The *Musnad* of al-Khwārazmī may be included in this class.

According to some authorities on traditions,<sup>1</sup> there is a fifth category of *Hadīth* works which consists of such traditions as are declared by the Muslim doctors to be unreliable and forged ones.

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(1) e.g. Shāh Waliy Allāh of Delhi. See HB, i, 134-35.



## CHAPTER VI

### SOME OF THE SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE ḤADĪTH LITERATURE

Every branch of literature develops certain special features on account of its particular subject-matter, the special character of the people who cultivate it and take part in its development, and the special social or political or historical conditions in which it originates and flourishes. *Ḥadīth* literature is no exception to this rule. Its hero, the Prophet of Islam, and the movement started by him attracted the serious attention of all the people of Arabia, including his friends as well as his enemies. His words and deeds were minutely observed by his opponents as well as by his supporters. His opponents made use of them in their opposition to him. His supporters tried to follow him scrupulously in whatever he did or said. The reports of his words and deeds served as a basis for the Islamic law, the Islamic social system and the Islamic polity.

On account of the great importance of these reports, the Prophet's enemies as well as some of his misguided friends forged a large number of them, and falsely attributed them to him. But his sincere friends and followers tried their best to check these forgeries, and established certain principles for the sake of criticising the forged reports and of establishing the true ones among them. They made it imperative for the reporters to give the names of the narrators through whom they received the reports. This chain of narrators is known among the traditionists as the system of *Isnād*. They tried to be as exact in their reports as was humanly possible. The women as well the men took prominent part in transmitting these reports to the future generations. They declared as unreliable all those reporters who were suspected of making forgery in their reports. In order to check their veracity, the



traditionists created a huge literature on the life and character of every reporter—i.e. the *Asmā' al-Rijāl*. In criticising the suspected reporters, the traditionists did not differentiate between the high and the low, or between the rulers or their officials and the common people. As a matter of fact, the important specialists and critics of these reporters generally dissociated themselves from the state officials, from the partisans in the civil war between the various parties of the Muslims, and from the sectarian leaders.

These special features of *Hadīth* literature and of its devotees will be dealt with in detail in the following pages.

### 1. FORGERY IN HADĪTH

It has been accepted by all the traditionists that there has been committed a great deal of forgery in *Hadīth*. Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal said that in no other branch of literature there had been committed so much forgery as in *Hadīth* and *Tafsīr*. The very existence of a large literature on the *Mawḍū'āt* (forged traditions) is a sure proof of extensive forgery committed in *Hadīth* literature. On account of these forgeries the whole of *Hadīth*-literature has been branded by several Orientalists as unreliable and inauthentic.

It is an interesting problem to determine the period when forgery in *Hadīth* began. Sir William Muir is of the opinion that it began during the caliphate of 'Uthmān.<sup>1</sup> But I think that it originated during the life-time of the Prophet himself. His opponents could not have failed to forge and attribute to him words and deeds for which he was not responsible. It was their purpose in thus mis-representing him to arouse public opinion against him. As a matter of fact, Ibn Ḥazm has accepted this explanation, and quoted an incident which took place during the life-time of the Prophet. He says:—After the Prophet's *hijra*, a man went to a suburb of Madīna, and told a tribe living there that the Prophet had given him

(1) LMu, xxxvi.



authority over them. He had resorted to this fraud because he wanted to marry a girl who was a member of the tribe, to whom he had proposed marriage before the Hijra, but who had never been given in marriage to him. The tribe sent a messenger to the Prophet to make enquiries concerning the authority that was claimed in his name. The Prophet denounced the pretender, and ordered that he be put to death—if he were still alive.<sup>1</sup>

The Hypocrites (*Munāfiqūn*) must have forged a good many traditions and attributed them to the Prophet. During the caliphate of Abū Bakr also, when apostasy had raised its head, it is not unlikely that some of the apostates should have forged such traditions as might suit their purpose. It may be due to this forgery that Abū Bakr and 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb were extremely strict in accepting traditions which were reported to them.

During the caliphate of 'Uthmān, the forgery of traditions became more common. Some of the members of the parties into which the Muslims were then divided, forged traditions in order to advance their party interest. By and by, this practice assumed larger dimensions. The various political parties, the heretics, the professional preachers, and even some of the sincere God-fearing Muslims (who thought that it was an act of religious merit to forge traditions in order to induce people to lead a pious life and to do what is laid down by religion), all made their contributions to the increasing stock of traditions falsely attributed to the Prophet.

The heretics alone forged thousands of traditions.<sup>2</sup> But more dangerous than these were the leaders of the political parties and the religious sects. They also forged traditions in praise of their different leaders and in support of their own views on religious problems. Still more dangerous were the professional preachers and story-tellers who, in order to

(1) IA, ii, 2-3, 83-84.

(2) TR, 103.



attract a large number of credulous common people, forged many of such traditions as would easily appeal to common men.<sup>1</sup>

All these various groups of forgers created a havoc in *Hadith* literature. But in order to meet this great danger of forgery, and to sift the forged traditions from the true ones, the sincere and honest traditionists introduced the system of *Isnād* and laid down important principles which are discussed in the works on *Dirāyat al-Hadith* (Criticism of *Hadith*).

## 2. THE SYSTEM OF *Isnād* (CHAIN OF TRANSMITTERS)

Each tradition in every collection of traditions (till the end of the third century of the Hijra) contains the chain of its transmitters—from the Prophet or from a Companion or from a Follower down to the last reporter or the compiler. The traditionists called this chain of transmitters an *Isnād* or authority. They attached great importance to it, and considered it as an indispensable part of a tradition. They tried to determine the relative value of the reliability of the various *Isnāds* and of their different classes. They produced a vast literature on the biographies of the transmitters for its sake, and developed the system into almost a science. Since the compilation of the collections of traditions and the composition of the works on the various connected subjects, they have applied the method of *Isnād* to those works as well as their manuscripts. In this system of *Isnād* the Muslims have taken great pride.

To determine the origin of the system of *Isnād* is a difficult but interesting problem. Caetani<sup>2</sup> and Horovitz<sup>3</sup> have tried to solve it. A. Harley has summarized their conclusions in his introduction to the *Musnad* of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz.<sup>4</sup> And Prof. J. Robson has collected together most of what has been

(1) See *supra*, pp. 58f.

(2) *AnIs*, i, 30.

(3) J. Horovitz, *Alter und Ursprung des Isnād, Der Islam*, viii (1917) pp. 39-47.

(4) *JASB*, 1924, pp. 404-405. \*



written by the Muslim scholars and the Orientalists on the subject, and has tried to evaluate it.<sup>1</sup>

Caetani tried to show that the system of *Isnād* could not have originated among the Arabs. The wild desolation of the Arabian deserts, and the restive nature and character of the primitive, ignorant, uncivilized and intolerant Arabs did not suit its origin and early growth among them. But Caetani's contention is based more on presumption than on facts. If accepted, it will only prove that the system of *Isnād* did not originate with the Arabs. With whom, then, did it originate? The great Italian orientalist has failed to give any example of its use by any other people.

Professor Margoliouth also in his lectures on the Arabic Historians only says, *en passant*, that the Greeks and the Romans rarely used it<sup>2</sup>

Professor Horovitz has carried his researches further. Giving several instances from the Jewish literature, he has proved that *Isnād* was used by the Jews before the Arabs. He has also tried to show that its use in the Jewish literature was found "as early as the Mosaic period, and by the Talmudic times its chain assumed enormous length, the subject-matter being of the most varied nature".<sup>3</sup>

But the main facts discovered by the minute researches of the distinguished modern German Orientalist had already been dealt with by a mediaeval scholar of Andalusia, Abū Muḥammad 'Alī b. Aḥmad, in his *al-Fiṣal fī al-Mīlāl*.<sup>4</sup>

Abū Muḥammad (364-456/994-1064) is commonly known as Ibn Ḥazm, and is recognized by the Muslim scholars as one of the greatest geniuses of Islam, and as one of the two most prolific Muslim writers—the other being the famous

(1) "The *Isnād* in Muslim Tradition", reprinted from the *Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society*, pp. 15-26.

(2) *ArH*, 20.

(3) *Der Islam*, *loc. cit.*

(4) *FFM*, ii, 67-70.



historian, Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī<sup>1</sup> Ibn Ḥazm has described in detail the various forms of the transmission of matters relating to the Islamic religion from the Prophet of Islam to the future generations. He has divided them into six classes:—

- (i) the transmission from the Prophet to the future generations by an overwhelming number of persons, Muslim as well as non-Muslim, of every generation, without any difference of opinion among them;
- (ii) their unanimous transmission by all the Muslim doctors of every generation since the time of the Prophet;
- (iii) their transmission from the Prophet by reliable persons of known identity and established reliability of every generation, each of them stating the name of his authority;
- (iv) their transmission by any one of the three classes of transmitters just mentioned, not from the Prophet, but from a person belonging to the generation next to the Prophet, the earliest transmitter being silent about the source of his information;
- (v) their transmission by any of the various classes of persons mentioned above, from the Prophet himself, but having in the chain of the transmitters a person who is known either to be a liar, or to be careless in his statement, or to be one whose reliability has been questioned; and
- (vi) their transmission by a chain of transmitters similar to that in the first three classes, but stopping either at a Companion or at a Follower or at any Imām after them who did not make any reference to the Prophet, in his statement.

(1) MUd, v. 88.



While dealing with these classes of the forms of transmission (*Isnād*) some of which overlap with one another, Ibn Ḥazm has made some remarks about their use by the Christians and the Jews. He says that the first three classes of transmission are entirely wanting in the Christian as well as in the Jewish literature. According to him, these two religions are based on the Old Testament and the New Testament. The *Isnād* of the former does not go back to Moses—rather, it stops short of him by many generations; and the latter is finally based on the testimony of five persons the reliability of each of whom has been questioned. About the third class of *Isnād* Ibn Ḥazm says that it is a special feature of the Islamic literature. The last three classes of *Isnād*, however, are according to him found in Christian as well as in Jewish literature. The first of them (the last three classes) is particularly frequent in the Jewish literature; whereas only one example of it (viz. the law relating to the impermissibility of divorce) is to be found in the Christian literature. As regards the last two classes of *Isnād*, Ibn Ḥazm observes that they are found in abundance in the religious literature of the Christians as well as of the Jews. He has also given certain details of the differences between the forms of transmission found in Islamic literature and those used by the Christians and the Jews.

These observations show that not only the main results of the researches of Horovitz, but also some of their details, had been anticipated and discussed eight centuries before him. As regards the statement of Horovitz that the system of *Isnād* was used by the Jews as early as the Mosaic period, it is certainly open to grave doubts, to which Ibn Ḥazm has alluded. Horovitz has not proved that these *Isnāds* are not later interpolations.

The Indians also used the system of *Isnād* long before the Muslim. But as far as I am aware, no serious notice of this fact has so far been taken. It was for the first time pointed out to me by my late friend, Dr. Prabodhchandra Bagchi, the Vice-Chancellor of the Visva-Bharati University (India). According to him, occasional use of the *Isnād* is found in the



ancient Indian literature—Hindu, Buddhist as well as Jaina. In the great epic, the *Mahabharata*, we find: "Vydsa composed it, Ganesa served as a scribe, and the work was handed down by Vaisampayana who communicated it to the king Janamejaya. Sauti who was present at the time heard it and narrated it to the assembly of sages".<sup>1</sup> The *Puranas* also contain some short *Isnād*. The *Sutras* (exegesis on Vedic literature) contain short chains of some of the transmitters through whom they have been handed down. In the *Sankhayana Aranyaka* (translated by Keith, pp. 71-72) and the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xv, pp. 224-27) the long lines of the successive teachers of these texts are given. In the first case, we get a list of 18 teachers, and in the latter case out of several lists the longest is of 27 teachers. In the Buddhistic literature in the early period, no chain of the transmitters (*Isnād*) is to be found. The text is almost always introduced with the common formula: "Thus I heard, once the Lord sojourned at..."<sup>2</sup> But in the later literature, long chains of transmitters are frequent—particularly, in such Sanskrit-Buddhist texts as are preserved in Tibetan translation. The colophon of the *Sadanga-yoga*, for example, contains the following chain of its successive transmitters:—

Buddha Vajradhara: Nagarjuna: Nagabodhi: Aryadeva:  
Chandrakirti: Sakyaraksita: Ratnamitra: Dharmabhadra:  
Gunamati: Manjusrijnana: Amoghasri: Viramati:  
Vijayakirti: Varaprajnadhar-mabhadra: Sribhadra:  
Dharmapala: Sakyadhraja: Vagisvarakirti: Ratnakirti:  
Vanaratna and Dharmabuddhi.

The last mentioned of these transmitters, who came from Eastern India, translated the text from Sanskrit into Tibetan, by the order of the master of Ron, with the assistance of Manjusrijnana, a Tibetan scholar from Stag-tshan (Tibet).<sup>3</sup>

More important than the question of the origin of *Isnād* (for our purpose), however, is to determine the period of its first

(1) Mhb, book i, canto 1; cf. HIL, i, 323.

(2) HIL, ii, 34, fn. 3.

(3) CFT, iii, 163.



application to *Hadīth*. Caetani again holds that al-Zuhri (d. 124/741) was the first to apply it to traditions, and that it was further developed by his pupils, Mūsa b. 'Uqba (d. 141/757) and Ibn Ishāq (d. 151/768), and others. According to Caetani, therefore, *Isnād* in traditions began and developed during the first half of the second century A.H.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Horowitz is of the opinion that the first appearance of *Isnād* in traditions was not later than the last third of the first century A. H.<sup>2</sup> Having given hard facts in support of his theory, he says: "*Isnād* in its primitive form was then—somewhere about the year 75 A.H.—already established, and one has no right, merely because it appears only incidentally in the letters, to deny to 'Urwa (who according to Caetani never used the *Isnād*) without further consideration, those *Aḥādīth* supplied with statements of authorities for which he stands as sponsor...*Isnād* was indeed already customary in his ('Urwa's) time, but it was not yet an absolute necessity".<sup>3</sup>

But J. Schacht is definitely of the opinion that *Isnād* is the most arbitrary part of traditions<sup>4</sup>, and that there is no reason to suppose that the regular practice of using *Isnāds* is older than the beginning of the second century A. H.<sup>5</sup> He has not discussed the first appearance of *Isnād* in *Hadīth*. He has quoted the well-known remark of Ibn Sirīn about the beginning of *Isnād* in *Hadīth*.<sup>6</sup> He interprets the word *fitna* used by Ibn Sirīn as referring to the civil war which began with the killing of the Umayyad caliph, Walīd b. Yazīd (126 A.H.). On taking into consideration the date of Ibn Sirīn's death (110 A.H.), Schacht regards the remark attributed to him as spurious. But his interpretation of the term *fitna* is arbitrary, and his opinion about the spuriousness of the statement made by Ibn Sirīn is unwarranted. Prof. Robson has ques-

(1) AnIs, i, 31.

(2) *Der Islam*, viii, 43-44.

(3) IsC, i, 550-51.

(4) OMJ, 163.

(5) *Ibid.* 37.

(6) OMJ, 36.



tioned Schacht's opinion, and remarks that it is during the middle of the first century of Islam that one could first expect any thing like an *Isnād*.<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to assign with certainty a definite period to the first appearance of *Isnād* in *Hadīth*. But there is no doubt that the period fixed for it by Horovitz, and the one suggested by Robson, are very near to what is claimed by the early traditionists. Ibn Sirīn is reported to have said that at first, people did not enquire about the *Isnād*, but that since the Disturbance (*Fitna*), they began to ask for it. The 'Disturbance' in his remark is claimed by Muslims to refer to the civil war between 'Alī and Mu 'āwīya which began in the year 35 A.H. 'Alī himself is reported to have advised the students of *Hadīth*: "When you write a tradition, write it with the *Isnād*".<sup>2</sup> Abū Hind 'Abd al-Raḥmān, a Companion (who must have died before the end of the first century of the Hijra), used to warn his students with the show of a stick, if they failed to give the *Isnād* while reciting a tradition.<sup>3</sup> From these facts and from the great caution of the important early Companions it may legitimately be inferred that the system of *Isnād* (being applied to tradition before the middle of the first century of the Hijra) was considered to be a necessary part of it (before the century ended).

Be it as it may, there is no doubt that having taken it up, the Muslims came to consider the *Isnād* as an indispensable part of traditions, developed it a great deal, gave it a firm foundation—by introducing to it the chronological method and collecting the biographies of the transmitters (which served as a basis for the criticism of their narrations), and by establishing various principles for determining the value of its different classes. The Indians, so far as it is known, never made any attempt towards the scientific treatment of the *Isnād*, nor are

(1) J. Robson, *op. cit.* on p. 164 (fn. 1) *above*, pp. 19-21.

(2) ML, v, 454.

(3) UGH, . This fact has also been reported by Ibn Sa'd in the *Tabaqāt*; but unfortunately, I cannot give the exact reference.



they known to have developed the chronological method. In the early literature of the Jews also there is no idea of the chronological method, which rendered their early *Isnāds* valueless. "In the Talmudic literature", says Prof. Horowitz, "there is no idea of chronological method, and the oldest extant work attempting such arrangement was composed after 885 A.D.—more than a century later than the earliest Islamic work on *Isnād-critique*". "From this fact", he continues, "and from the fact that the important Jewish works (of this period) had been composed in the Islamic dominions, it may be inferred that this historical interest (of the Jews) was due to the Islamic influence".<sup>1</sup>

The Muslims not only gave a scientific form and basis to the system of *Isnād*, but also tried to make a comparative study of the various *Isnāds* used in *Hadīth* literature with a view to establishing their relative value. It is said that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Ibn Ma'īn and Ibn al-Madīnī once assembled together with some other traditionists and discussed the most reliable *Isnād*. One of them said that the best *Isnād* was Shu'ba-Qatāda-Sa'id-Āmir-Umm Salma. 'Alī b. al-Madīnī held that the best one was Ibn 'Aun-Muḥammad-'Ubayda-'Alī. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal was of the opinion that the best *Isnād* was al-Zuhri-Sālim-'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar.<sup>2</sup> al-Bukhārī, however, was of the opinion that the best *Isnād* was Mālik-Nāfi'-Ibn 'Umar. To this *Isnād* the later traditionists have added the names of al-Shāfi'i and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, making it one long chain from Aḥmad upto Ibn 'Umar. They gave it the title of 'the golden chain'.<sup>3</sup> This chain, however, is rare in *Hadīth* literature. In the whole of the *Musnad* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, in spite of its large size, there are not to be found (says Suyūṭī)<sup>4</sup> more than four traditions with this *Isnād*.

Prof. Schacht has questioned the authenticity of many of these *Isnāds* also. He criticises 'the golden chain' on the

(1) Der Islam, viii, 47.

(2) TR, 20-21.

(3) FM, 8-10.

(4) TR, 20.



grounds that Mālik being too young at the time of Nāfi's death, could not have heard from the latter, and, secondly, that it is a family *Isnād* which (according to Schacht) is open to doubt.<sup>1</sup> But Schacht's arguments are open to serious criticism, because Mālik was (according to Schacht himself)<sup>2</sup> about 23 years of age at the time of Nāfi's death, and was therefore quite in a position to hear from him. As for the spuriousness of the family *Isnāds* in general, it is only a matter of opinion.

Ibn Ma'in considered 'Ubayd Allāh-Ibn 'Umar-Qāsim-'Ā'ishah to be the best *Isnād*, and called it a 'chain of pure gold'.<sup>3</sup> Many other traditionists have selected certain other chains as the most reliable of them. But the considered opinion of the later traditionists in general is that it is impossible to call any *Isnād* the best one in the whole of *Hadīth* literature. The judgment of the various authorities about it, therefore, must refer to the traditions accepted on the authority of a particular Companion or Follower or to the traditionists of a particular place.<sup>4</sup> Some of the traditionists, however, have also tried to point out the weakest *Isnād*. They hold that Marwān-Kalbī-Abū Šālih-Ibn 'Abbās is the weakest one, and they call it a 'false' *Isnād*.<sup>5</sup>

Having been introduced into *Hadīth*, the system of *Isnād* was not only continued for more than four centuries in the narration of every individual tradition, but was also applied to the books on traditions and on the connected subjects since the time of their compilation. Every teacher of every book on *Hadīth* or on a subject connected with it at every period in the history of *Hadīth* literature gave (in order to guard against forgery of the books or parts of the books) his students the names of the teachers through whom he had received it from

(1) OMJ, 170, 176.

(2) See his article on Mālik b. Anas in EI<sup>ss</sup>.

(3) TA, 507.

(4) TR, 22-23.

(5) MSt, ii, 247, fn. 2.



its original author, each of them stating that he read the whole or a part of it (which had to be specified) with his own teacher. The certificates of competency of students to teach a book on *Hadīth* granted them by their teachers contain not only the statement of the fact that they read it with him, but also the name of their own teachers of the book, and of the teachers of their teachers upto its author.

The practice of giving the *Isnād* of the books to which great importance was attached by the Muslim traditionists (who call it the 'bases' of a book) must have been introduced as early as the books on traditions and connected subjects were compiled. Dr. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid has traced it back to the fourth century, and has given an example of it.<sup>1</sup> Here are a few other examples belonging to an earlier period than that quoted by al-Munajjid :—

1. a copy of a collection of *Aḥādīth* (said to be *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, part xiii) dated 368 A.H., and preserved in the Municipal Library, Alexandria (No. 836B);
2. a copy of *Kitāb Gharīb al-Ḥadīth* by Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (154/770-223/837) which was copied at Damascus in 319 A.H., and the reading of which has been traced back to the author in whose presence the original manuscript was read—a fact recorded on the authority of Abū Sulaymān Muḥammad b. Manṣūr al-Balkhī.<sup>2</sup>
3. the most important of all such manuscripts is the fragment of a book on *Maghāzī* by Wahb b. Munabbih. It is preserved in the Schott-Reinhardt Papyri, and

(1) "*Iḥzāt al-Samā' fī al-Makhlūṭāt al-Qadimah*" in the *Journal of the Institute of Arabic Manuscripts*, vol. i, part 2, Cairo, November 1955, pp. 232ff.

(2) Prof. Ahmed Ates, *Corum ve yozgat kutuphanlerinden bazı muhim Arapça yazamlar*, Istanbul, 1959, pp. 3-4.



has been described by C. H. Becker (*Papyri Schott-Reinhardt* I, Heidelberg, 1906)<sup>1</sup> It is dated Dhu' al-Qa'da 229/July 844, and bears on its top its *Isnād* upto its author.

The practice of giving the *Isnād* was certainly useful and essential for keeping up the authenticity of a book in an age when printing was not known, and when the copies of a book consisted only of manuscripts made by individual persons who could make changes and commit forgeries in the works of authors of established reputation. But in modern times, with the appearance of the printing press and the multiplicity of copies and editions, it has been rendered needless and useless. But human nature is conservative. The old orthodox institutions still persist in it. No scholar, however competent, is supposed to have a right to teach a book on *Hadīth* for which he has not received the necessary permission from a competent teacher. And competency consists only in receiving a permission from a teacher who possesses a similar permission from his own teacher. As a matter of fact, the whole system of teaching, particularly of *Hadīth*, in India and (so far as I know) in the whole Islamic world has been reduced to mere formality. Very few of the teachers possess any knowledge of the *Asmā' al-Rijāl*—a subject so essential for a study of *Hadīth*.

According to the traditionists, the *Isnād* of books had to be put down on their manuscripts also. They held that it was advisable for the students to write on their manuscripts of a book, after *Bismillāh*, the names of their teachers together with their *kunya* and *nisba*, and the names of the teachers of their teachers upto the author of the book himself. Above the *Bismillāh*, or on the first page of a manuscript, or at any other prominent part of it, should be put down the list of the other students who read the book in the same class together with the owner of the manuscripts, and the places and the times or dates where and when the various parts of it were read by them. The names of all the students who attended

(1) I am indebted to Prof. Otto Spies for a copy of p. 8 of Becker's article. For additional information see "Wahb b. Munabbih", J. Horowitz, EIs.



the lectures with the teacher should also be written on the margin of the manuscript.<sup>1</sup>

These notes about the teachers, the place and dates of lectures and the names of students are found in a large number of the manuscripts on our subject which are still preserved in many of the important libraries in the East and in the West. The manuscript of the *Musnad* of Abū Dā'ūd al-Ṭayālīsī,<sup>2</sup> of the *Sunan* of al-Dārimī,<sup>3</sup> of *al-Mashī-khat ma' al-Takhrīj*<sup>4</sup>, of the *Kitāb al-Kifāya*,<sup>5</sup> of the four volumes of the *Tā'rikh Dimashq*,<sup>6</sup> and of many other works on our subject, in the O. P. Library of Bankipur; and the manuscript of the *Sunan* of Abū Dā'ūd<sup>7</sup> in the State library of Berlin, are only a few instances of them. A large number of other manuscripts of this type may be easily found out by the study of the catalogues of the various important libraries<sup>8</sup>. Of course, there are also manuscripts which contain only a few or none of the detailed notes mentioned above. These are defective manuscripts from which the parts containing the above notes have been lost, or are such as had been copied by common scribes for the use of lay men, not specialists in the subject. This practice of making a note of the above particulars on the colophons or margins of manuscripts appears to have been in vogue among the traditionists since the second century of the Hijra. Ḥafṣ b. Ghiyāth (d. 194/809), the well known judge, is said to have decided a case on its basis. Fuḍayl b. 'Iyād (d. 187/802) is said to have forbidden the traditionists to keep back the certificate of a student from him. al-Zuhri (d. 124/741), the famous traditionist, is also stated to have expressed the same view.<sup>9</sup>

(1) MIS, 81f; TR, 158; FM, 265.

(2) OPC, v, 1, No. 241.

(3) *Ibid.* No. 254.

(4) *Ibid.* part 2, No. 322.

(5) *Ibid.* No. 438.

(6) *Ibid.* xii, No. 800.

(7) \*Ahlwardt's *Catalogue*, ii, No. 246.

(8) e.g. *Cat. Br. Mus.*, pp. 79, 90, 96, etc.

(9) MIS, 82.



So far as I have been able to investigate the matter, the manuscripts of the works on *Hadīth* and connected subjects are almost unique in supplying us with all these interesting details which are of immense utility in determining the genuineness of these records of the past, just as Islamic traditions are unique in the thorough and scientific use of the system of giving the chain of transmitters. The Greek, the Latin, the Hebrew and the Syriac manuscripts, so far as I can judge by the perusal of their catalogues, seldom if ever supply us with these materials. The Indian manuscripts in certain cases contain a long list of teachers through whom they have been received. But they never give us the other details which we have described, and which are found in the manuscripts on our subjects.

These particulars, found on the colophons or margin of a manuscript, are of immense importance to a modern scholar. They prove of great help in determining its genuineness and authenticity. In order to determine it without such data, one has to take the aid of external materials which are seldom of such value as the internal evidence in a manuscript itself. About the Greek manuscripts, for example, it is almost impossible to affirm with complete certainty that a particular manuscript is a completely genuine copy of a book composed by an author thousands of years ago.

The system of *Isnād*, however, being introduced into Arabic literature in connection with individual traditions and their collections, was extended by the Arabic authors to many other branches of it—e.g. geography, history, fiction etc.<sup>1</sup> "There are works", says Prof. Margoliouth, "of which the subject-matter is so frivolous that one marvels at the trouble taken by the author to record the name of each trans-

(1) Many Arabic Mss. on subjects other than traditions, having some of the above-mentioned notes are described by G. Vajda in his "Les certificats De Lecture Et De Transmission Dans Les Manuscrits Arabes De La Bibliothèque Nationale De Paris" (Paris, 1957). See pp. 37 ff.



mitter and the date and place at which he heard the narrative; an example is the *Maṣāri' al-'Ushshāq* of al-Sarrāj, a collection of cases wherein men and women are supposed to have died of love, where the author records with minute accuracy the date at which he heard the story and gives similar details of the transmitters".<sup>1</sup>

In the use of the *Isnād*, therefore, Arabic literature is certainly unique. Referring to its use in the Arabic historical works, Hitti says: "This form of historic composition is unique in the case of the Arabic historiography—namely, to go back to the source and trace the line of authorities".<sup>2</sup>

### 3. THE PART PLAYED BY WOMEN IN THE TRANSMISSION AND CULTIVATION OF HADĪTH AND HADĪTH LITERATURE

There are few sciences in the evolution and cultivation of which the women took an important part together with the men. The science of *Hadīth* is an outstanding exception in this respect. Since the earliest history of Islam, the women-traditionists had been taking prominent part in the preservation and cultivation of *Hadīth*, and at every stage in the development of *Hadīth* literature, they took keen and lively interest in it. At every period in its history, there lived numerous eminent women-traditionists before whom many of their prominent brethren bowed down with reverence and respect. Short biographical notices of many of them are found in many works on the *Asmā' al-Rijāl*, the last parts of which generally deal with the women-traditionists.

During the life-time of the Prophet, many of the women had been not only the cause of the evolution of many traditions, but also their transmitters to their brethren in faith. After the Prophet's death, many women Companions—particularly, his wives—were looked upon as important custodians of 'knowledge', and were approached for instruction in the subject by its enthusiastic students, to whom they

(1) ArH, 19.

(2) OIS, intro., p. 3.



# ILLUSTRATION (2)



By courtesy of the Secretary, O. P. Library,  
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readily opened the rich store which they had gathered in the company of their holy Prophet and guide. The names of Ḥafṣa, Umm Ḥabība, Maymūna, Umm Salma and 'Ā'ishah are familiar to every student of *Hadīth* as some of its earliest transmitters.<sup>1</sup> In particular, 'Ā'ishah is one of the most important figures in the whole history of *Hadīth* literature—not only as one of the earliest reporters of the largest number of *Aḥādīth*, but also as one of the most careful interpreters of them.<sup>2</sup>

In the next following period—the period of the Followers—also, women held important positions as traditionists. Ḥafṣa, the daughter of Ibn Sirīn,<sup>3</sup> Umm al-Dardā' the younger (d. 81 A.H.), and 'Amra, the daughter of 'Abd al-Raḥmān, are only a few of the women-traditionists of this period. Umm al-Dardā' was held by Iyās b. Mu'āwiya, an important traditionist of the time and a judge of recognized ability and merit, to be superior to all the traditionists of this period—including the celebrated masters of *Hadīth* like al-Ḥasan and Ibn Sirīn.<sup>4</sup> 'Amra was considered to be a great authority on traditions related by 'Ā'ishah. Among her students, Abū Bakr b. Ḥazm (the celebrated judge of Madīnah) was ordered by the caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz to write down all the traditions known to her.<sup>5</sup>

After them, 'Ābidah al-Madaniyyah, 'Abda the daughter of Bishr, Umm 'Umar al-Thaqafiyyah, Zaynab the granddaughter of 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh b. al-'Abbās, Nafisah the daughter of Ḥasan b. Ziyād, Khadija Umm Muḥammad, 'Abda the daughter of 'Abd al-Raḥmān, and several other members of the fair sex excelled in and delivered lectures on our subject. Some of them—rising from humble origins, or descending from high families—also acquired mastery of this subject. For example, 'Ābida who was a slave girl of

(1) See *supra* pp. 23, 31.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) TIS, viii, 355.

(4) TR, 215.

(5) TIS, viii, 353.



Muḥammad b. Yazīd had learnt a good deal of traditions with the teachers in Madīnah. She was given by her master to Ḥabīb Daḥḥūn, the great traditionist of Spain, when he visited the holy city in connection with his pilgrimage. Daḥḥūn was greatly impressed by her learning, took her as his wife, and brought her to Andalusia. It is said that she related 10,000 traditions on the authority of her Madinite teachers.<sup>1</sup> Zaynab (d. 142/759), the daughter of Sulaymān, was a princess by birth. Her father was a cousin of al-Saffāḥ, the founder of the Abbasid dynasty, and had been a governor of Baṣra, Oman and Bahrayn (during the caliphate of al-Manṣūr).<sup>2</sup> Zaynab, however, acquired mastery on *Ḥadīth*, was considered as one of the distinguished women-traditionists of her time, and related traditions to several important men traditionists.<sup>3</sup>

This partnership of the women with men in the cultivation of *Ḥadīth* continued throughout its history. All the important compilers of traditions since its earliest history received many of them from their women *shuyūkh*. Every important collection of traditions contains the names of many women as immediate authorities of the author. After the compilation of the various collections of traditions, however, the women traditionists acquired mastery of many of these works and delivered lectures on them which were attended by a large number of students (men as well as women), and many important men traditionists sat at their feet and secured their-certificates.

In the fourth century, Fāṭima (d. 312/924), the daughter of 'Abd al-Raḥmān, and known as Ṣūfiyah (Mystic) on account of her dress and self-denial; Fāṭimah the grand-daughter of Abū Dā'ūd (the compiler of the well known *Sunan* work); Amat al-Waḥid (d. 377/987), the daughter of al-Muḥāmili, the celebrated jurist; Umm al-Faṭḥ Amat al-Salām (d. 390/

(1) NT, ii, 96.

(2) GT, 430.

(3) TB, xiv, 434 f.



999) the daughter of Abū Bakr Aḥmad (d. 350/961), the judge; Jumu'a, the daughter of Aḥmad, and some other women acquired excellence in traditions, and delivered lectures on the subject which were attended by a good many students.<sup>1</sup>

In the fifth and sixth centuries of the Hijra, several women gained reputation as traditionists. Fāṭima, the daughter of the well known mystic Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-Daqqāq, and wife of the famous Muslim divine Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayri, was celebrated not only for her mastery of calligraphy, but also for her mastery of traditions and for the high *Isnād* she had for them.<sup>2</sup> Karīmah al-Marwazīyah (d. 463/1070), the daughter of Aḥmad, was considered to be the best authority on the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī in her time. Abū Dhar of Hirat, one of the greatest traditionists of the time, attached great importance to her authority, and advised the students of *Hadīth* to read the great *Ṣaḥīḥ* with her, because she had received it with the *Isnād* of Ḥaytham. As a great woman traditionist, she is reported to have related traditions to several important Muslim divines.<sup>3</sup> "As a matter of fact", writes Goldziher, "her name occurs with extraordinary frequency in the *Ijāzas* (certificates granted to students) for narrating the text of the book (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*)."<sup>4</sup> It occurs in the *Ijāza* of Abū al-Maḥāsin; and with her the book was read by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (the celebrated biographer of the eminent men of Baghdad)<sup>5</sup> and al-Ḥumaydī (428-488 A.H.), the famous traditionist of Andalusia.<sup>6</sup>

Not only Karīmah, but several women traditionists, (according to Goldziher) "took very prominent part in the history of the transmission of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*".<sup>7</sup> Among these fair transmitters of the text of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Fāṭimah (d. 539/1144),

(1) TB, xiv, 441-44.

(2) ShD, v, 48; WA, No. 413. Fatima died in 480/1087.

(3) NT, i, 876.

(4) MSt, ii, 405, fn.

(5) MUd, i, 247.

(6) OPC, v, 1, pp. 98 f.

(7) MSt, ii, 405.



the daughter of Muḥammad; Shuhda (d. 574/1178), the daughter of Aḥmad b. al-Faraj; Sitt al-Wuzarā' (d. 716/1316), the daughter of 'Umar were especially celebrated.<sup>1</sup> Fāṭimah narrated the book on the authority of the great traditionist, Sa'id al-'Ayyār; and she was given by the traditionists the proud title of *Musnidah Isbahān* (the great authority in Isfahan). Shuhda was a celebrated calligrapher and a traditionist of great reputation. She has been described by the biographers as "the calligrapher, the great authority on *Hadīth*, and the pride of womanhood". Her great grand-father was a dealer in needles, and was therefore known as al-Ibrī. But her father, Abū Naṣr (d. 506/1112), had acquired taste for *Hadīth*, and studied it with several masters of the subject.<sup>2</sup> He gave his daughter sound education in traditions (which she also studied with many competent teachers of established reputation), and gave her in marriage to 'Alī b. Muḥammad, an important person at the time. 'Alī had some literary taste, and at a later period he became a boon companion of the caliph al-Muqtafī; he founded a college and a monastery, and made large endowments on them. His wife, Shuhda, however, gained reputation as a traditionist, and was noted for her high *Isnād*.<sup>3</sup> Her lectures on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and other works on *Hadīth* were attended by a large crowd of students; and on account of her great reputation, some people even falsely claimed to have been her disciples.<sup>4</sup> Again, Sitt al-Wuzarā' was known as the *Musnidah* of her time, and she delivered lectures (on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and other works) in Egypt and at Damascus.<sup>5</sup> Lectures on the *Ṣaḥīḥ* were also delivered by Umm al-Khayr Amat al-Khāliq (811-911/1408-1505) who was the last great authority of the school of the Ḥijāz.<sup>6</sup> 'Ā'ishah the daughter of 'Abd al-Hādī also lectured on the great book.<sup>7</sup>

(1) ShD, iv, 123, 248.

(2) KIA, x, 346.

(3) WA, No. 295.

(4) MSt, ii, 406.

(5) ShD, vi, 40.

(6) *Ibid.* viii, 14.

(7) KI, 36.



The study of the *Ijāzas* of the traditionists, of the works on the *Asmā' al-Rijāl*, and of the colophons of the manuscripts of the works of *Hadīth*, shows that the women traditionists of various periods read out to their students not only the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī, but also many other works on the subject. Umm al-Khayr Fāṭimah (d. 532/1137) the daughter of 'Alī, and Fāṭimah al-Shahrzūriyah delivered lectures on the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim.<sup>1</sup> Fāṭimah al-Jauzdāniyah (d. 524/1129) narrated to her students the three *Mu'jams* of al-Ṭabarānī.<sup>2</sup> Zaynab of Harran (d. 688/1289) whose lectures attracted a large crowd of students read with them the *Musnad* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, the largest known collection of traditions.<sup>3</sup> Juwayriyah (d. 783/1381) the daughter of 'Umar, and Zaynab (d. 722/1322) the daughter of Aḥmad b. 'Umar, who had travelled widely in pursuit of *Hadīth* and delivered lectures in Egypt as well as at Madīnah, narrated to her students the collections of al-Dārimī and of 'Abd b. Ḥumayd; and students travelled from far and wide in order to attend her discourses.<sup>4</sup> Zaynab (d. 740/1339) the daughter of Aḥmad (generally known as Kamāl) had acquired a camel load of diplomas; she delivered lectures on the *Musnad* of Abū Ḥanīfah, the *Shamā'il* of al-Tirmidhī, and on the *Sharḥ Ma'āni al-Āthār* of al-Ṭaḥāwī (the last of which she had read with another woman traditionist, 'Ajībah, the daughter of Abū Bakr).<sup>5</sup> "On her authority is based", says Goldziher, "the authenticity of the Gotha manuscript...in which occur the names of numerous other women who studied it".<sup>6</sup> With her and various other women, the great traveller, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, studied traditions during his stay at Damascus.<sup>7</sup> The famous biographer of the celebrated men of Damascus, Ibn al-'Asākir (who had received

(1) ShD, iv, 100.

(2) KI, 16.

(3) KU, 28f.

(4) ShD, vi, 56.

(5) *Ibid.* 126; KI, 14, 18; QT, 73.

(6) MSt, ii, 407.

(7) *Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah*. Éd. C. Defremery et al. Paris, 1843. p. 253.



instruction in *Hadīth* from more than 1200 men and from 80 women traditionists) got the *Ijāza* of Zaynab (the daughter of 'Abd al-Raḥmān) for the *Muwaṭṭā* of Mālik.<sup>1</sup> Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī read the *Risālah* of al-Shāfi'ī with Hājar, the daughter of Muḥammad.<sup>2</sup> 'Afīf al-Dīn Junayd, a traditionist of the ninth century A.H., read the *Sunan* of al-Dārimī with Fāṭimah, the daughter of Aḥmad b. Qāsim.<sup>3</sup>

In the seventh century of the Hijra also, many women traditionists made their marks as teachers of *Hadīth*. Some of them have already been mentioned. Some others who were no less prominent, are Zaynab bint al-Sha'rī (524-615/1129-1218); Karīma (d. 641/1218); Ṣafīyah the daughter of 'Abd al-Waḥhāb; and Zaynab (d. 688/1289) the daughter of al-Makkī.

Zaynab bint al-Sha'rī studied *Hadīth* with several important traditionists; she delivered lectures to many students some of whom gained great reputation as literary men—e.g. Ibn Khallikān, the author of the well-known biographical dictionary, *Wafayāt al-A'yān*.<sup>4</sup> Karīmah is described by the biographers as the authority of Syria (*Musnidat al-Shām*). She delivered lectures on many works on *Hadīth* on the authority of numerous masters.<sup>5</sup> Zaynab the daughter of al-Makkī gained great reputation as a traditionist, and round her flocked together a large crowd of students in order to attend her learned discourses.

The eighth and the ninth centuries were extremely rich in woman traditionists. A large number of those of the eighth century are mentioned by Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī in his biographical dictionary of the prominent men and women

(1) MBn, v, 140 f.

(2) MUd, 17 f.

(3) OPC, v, 1, pp. 175 f.

(4) WA, No. 250.

(5) ShD, v, 212, 404.



of this period, *al-Durar al-Kāminah* (on which is mainly based the sixth volume of Ibn 'Imād's *Shadharāt al-Dhahab*, a large biographical dictionary of the prominent traditionists from the first to the tenth centuries of the Hijra). Various manuscripts of the *Durar* are preserved in different libraries in the East and in the West; and it has been published by the Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif, Hyderabad (India). In this work Ibn Hajar has given short biographical notices of about 170 prominent women of the eighth century, most of whom are traditionists, and with many of whom the author himself had studied. Goldziher was struck by the large number of women to whom the author had devoted his various articles.<sup>1</sup> Some of these women are recognised as the best traditionists of the period. For example, Juwayriyah the daughter of Aḥmad, to whom we have already referred, studied various works on traditions with many important traditionists of the time. These included men as well as women. Having mastered the subject, she delivered lectures to many students. "Some of my teachers", says Ibn Hajar, "and many of my contemporaries attended her discourses".<sup>2</sup> 'Ā'ishah (723-816 A.H.) the daughter of 'Abd al-Hādī, with whom Ibn Hajar studied for a considerable time, was considered to be the best traditionist of her time. A large number of students undertook long journeys in order to attend her discourses.<sup>3</sup> Sitt al-'Arab (d. 760/1358) had been the teacher of the well-known traditionist, al-'Irāqī (d. 742/1341), and of al-Haythamī and many others who derived a good deal of their knowledge from her. Her student, al-'Irāqī, also presented his son to her for instruction.<sup>4</sup> Daqīqa (d. 746/1345) the daughter of Murshid, a celebrated woman traditionist of the time, had received instruction from numerous women traditionists. One of her teachers was the daughter of Aḥmad to whom we have already referred. Many other traditionists belonging to the eighth century have been mentioned by Ibn Hajar and 'Abd

(1) MSt, ii, 406.

(2) DK, i, No. 1472.

(3) ShD, vii, 120 f.

(4) Ibid. vi, 208.



al-Ḥa'iy 'Imād al-Dīn to whose works reference may be made by those who may be interested in the subject.

Of the women traditionists of the ninth century, however, many have been mentioned by Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī (830-897/1427-1492) in his *al-Daw' al Lāmi'*, in which he has collected together the biographical notices of the eminent persons of the period (ninth century A.H.). It has been summarized by 'Abd al-Salām and by 'Umar b. al-Shammā,<sup>1</sup> and a defective manuscript of the work of the latter is preserved in the O.P. Library of Patna.<sup>2</sup> 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Umar b. Fahd (812-871/1409-1466) also, in his *Mu'jam al-Shuyūkh* (compiled in 861 A.H., and devoted to the biographical notices of more than 1100 teachers of the author) has mentioned more than 130 women traditionists who lived during this period, and with whom he had studied.<sup>3</sup> All of them had gained some reputation as traditionists. Some of them were recognized to be among the best traditionists of their time, and some of their students have been acknowledged to be among the most celebrated custodians of *Hadīth* in the next generation. Umm Hānī Maryam (778-871/1376-1466) the daughter of Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad, for example, having got the Qur'ān by heart in her childhood, and having learnt the various Islamic sciences in vogue at the time, pursued the study of *Hadīth* with the best traditionists of her age at Mecca and Cairo. She was celebrated for her mastery of calligraphy, for her command on the Arabic language, for her natural aptitude for Poetry, and for her mastery of traditions. She was noted for her piety and strict observance of religious duties. She fasted very often, and performed pilgrimage thirteen times. Her son was a noted Muslim scholar of the tenth century; he had great respect for her, and constantly attended her about the later part of her life. She regularly delivered lectures on *Hadīth*, and gave *Ijāzas* to many scholars. Ibn Fahd read with her a few works on the

(1) GAL, Sup. 2, p. 34.

(2) OPC, xii, No. 727.x

(3) *Ibid.*



subject.<sup>1</sup> Bā'i Khātūn (d. 864/1459) the daughter of Abū al-Ḥasan, having studied traditions with Abū Bakr al-Mizzī (the elder and the younger) and with numerous other traditionists, and having secured the *Ijāzas* of a large number of masters of *Hadīth* (both men and women), delivered lectures on the subject in Syria and Egypt. She is said to have been fond of teaching.<sup>2</sup> 'Ā'ishah (760-842/1358-1438) the daughter of Ibrāhīm (generally known as Ibnat al-Sharā'ihī) studied a good deal of traditions at Cairo, Damascus and other places. She delivered lectures on the subject which were attended by many recognized scholars.<sup>3</sup> Umm al-Khayr Sa'ida of Mecca (d. 850/1446) received instruction in *Hadīth* from numerous traditionists of places widely apart, and gained reputation as an authority on traditions.<sup>4</sup>

So far as may be gathered from the available sources on the subject, the interest of women in traditions appears to have declined considerably from the tenth century of the Hijra. The *al-Nūr al-Sāfir* of 'Aydarusī, the *Khulāṣat al-Akhhbār* of al-Muḥibbī, and the *al-Suḥub al-Wābilah* of Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Najdī (i.e. biographical dictionaries of the eminent persons of the tenth, the eleventh and twelfth centuries of the Hijra respectively) hardly contain the names of more than a dozen of eminent women traditionists. But it would be wrong to conclude that since the tenth century, the women entirely lost interest in our subject. Some women traditionists, who had gained reputation in the ninth century, lived till about the first quarter of the tenth century, and they continued their services to our subject. Asmā' (d. 904/1498) the daughter of Kamāl al-Dīn Mūsa wielded great influence with the Sulṭāns and their officials to whom she often made recommendations which were always accepted by them. She delivered lectures on *Hadīth* and trained women in various Islamic sciences.<sup>5</sup> 'Ā'ishah (d. 906/1500),

(1) DL, xii, No. 980.

(2) *Ibid.* No. 58.

(3) *Ibid.* No. 450.

(4) *Ibid.* No. 901.

(5) NS, 49.



the daughter of Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, and wife of Muṣliḥ al-Dīn (the judge), taught traditions to many students, including Ibn Ṭūlūn (890-955/1485-1514). Later on, she was appointed as a professor in the Ṣāliḥiyya College in Damascus.<sup>1</sup> Fāṭimah (870-925/1465-1519) the daughter of Yūsuf of Aleppo was known as one of the excellent scholars of her time.<sup>2</sup> Umm al-Khayr granted *Ijāza* to one of the pilgrims of Mecca in the year 938/1531.<sup>3</sup>

The last important woman traditionist known to us was Fāṭimah al-Fuḍayliyyah who is also known as al-Shaykhah al-Fuḍayliyyah. She was born before the end of the twelfth century, acquired excellence in the art of calligraphy and in the various Islamic sciences. She copied and collected a large number of books. She had a special interest in *Hadīth*, read a good deal on the subject, received the diplomas of a good many learned men, and acquired good reputation as a traditionist. About the end of her life, she went to Mecca where she settled down and founded a rich public library. Here she attracted many eminent traditionists who attended her lectures and received certificates from her. Among them, Shaykh 'Umar al-Ḥanafī and Shaykh Muḥammad Sāliḥ al-Shāfi'ī may be particularly mentioned. She died in 1247/1831.<sup>4</sup>

These fair traditionists of Islam, as one may see from what has been said, did not confine their activities to a personal study of traditions or to the private coaching of a few individuals in it, but they took their seats as students as well as teachers in public educational institutions—side by side with their brethren. They attended general classes jointly with the men traditionists, and in turn delivered lectures to large classes which were attended by men as well as women students. The colophons of many manuscripts which are still preserved in many libraries show them both as students

(1) *TbT*, see OPC, xii, No. 665 ff.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) MSt, ii, 407.

(4) *al-Suḥub al-Wābilah*, see OPC, xii, No. 785.



ILLUSTRATION 3(i)a

[illegible]



## ILLUSTRATION 3(i)b

[illegible]



## ILLUSTRATION 3(i)c

[illegible]



ILLUSTRATION 3(ii)



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Bankipore (Patna).



attending large general classes, and also as teachers delivering regular courses of lectures to them. The certificate on the folios 238-40 of the *al-Mashīkhat ma'al-Takhrij* of Ibn al-Bukhārī shows that numerous women attended a regular course of eleven lectures which was delivered to a large class consisting of more than 500 students (whose names are mentioned in the certificate) in the Jāmi' 'Umar at Damascus in the year 687/1288.<sup>1</sup> Another certificate on folio 40 of the same manuscript shows that many female students (whose names are mentioned) attended another course of six lectures on the book, which was delivered by Ibn al-Ṣairafī to a class of more than 200 students at Aleppo in the year 736/1336.<sup>2</sup> And a certificate on folio 250 of the same manuscript shows that a celebrated woman traditionist, Umm 'Abd Allāh, delivered a course of five lectures on the book to a class of more than 50 students including both men and women, at Damascus in the year 837/1433.<sup>3</sup> Various notes on the manuscript of the *Kitāb al-Kifāya* of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, and of a collection of various treatises on *Hadīth*, show Ni'ma the daughter of 'Alī; Umm Aḥmad Zaynab, the daughter of al-Makkī, and other women traditionists delivering lectures on either of the two books, sometimes independently, and sometimes jointly with some celebrated men traditionists, in some important educational institutions like Madrasah 'Azīziyah and Madrasah Diyā'iyyah, to regular classes of students, some of which (lectures) were attended (among others) by Aḥmad, a son of the famous general Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. These are only a few instances of the active service of women to the cultivation of *Hadīth* literature.<sup>4</sup>

(1) See Illustration No. 3 (i).

(2) Ibid. No. 3 (ii).

(3) OPC, v, 2, p. 54.

(4) Ibid. v, 2, pp. 155-159, 180-208. The Library possesses many other rare literary gems of great value. The Zāhiriyyah Library (Damascus) possesses several manuscripts copied by women. See 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Maymanī's article (pp. 1-14) in *al-Mabāḥith al-'Ilmiyyah* Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif, Hyderabad (India); 1358 A.H.



## 4. THE INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE TRADITIONISTS

Another important feature of the *Hadīth* literature is its development by the religious-minded Muslim doctors without any help or encouragement from the caliphs, Umayyad or Abbasid. While almost the whole of the Arabic scientific literature developed under the encouraging and helpful influence of the caliphs and their courtiers, and almost every worker in the field of the Arabian sciences basked in the sunshine of their generosity, the devotees of *Hadīth* were generally either ill-treated by those who reigned in the name of the Islamic religion, or in their pious stoicism they rejected and refused favours if they were ever offered to them. None of the compilers of the important and authoritative collections of *Hadīth* ever received any post or purse or privilege from the caliphs or their officials. Almost the whole of the important and authoritative part of *Hadīth* literature developed as a result of the spontaneous religious enthusiasm of the Muslims—in spite of the caliphs and their officials.

Throughout the reign of the Umayyads (with the exception of the religious reign of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz who helped the collection and compilation of *Aḥādīth* in various ways), the strict traditionists had been either completely opposed or neutral to the state. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās, Muḥammad b. Sīrīn, Sa'īd b. al-Musaiyyib, al-Ḥasan of Baṣra, Sufyān al-Thaurī and other traditionists (who are considered to be the pillars of the science of *Hadīth*) had been entirely indifferent to the Umayyad rulers. "Since the death of Sa'īd", says Goldziher, "the pious traditionists disliked the state of affairs under this rule. They became indifferent to the tyrannical government, and passively resisted it". "The official party", he adds, "therefore despised and hated them".<sup>1</sup> These pious traditionists believed and declared that the association with the rulers was a source of sin.<sup>2</sup>

(1) MSt, ii, 31f.

(2) JBI, i, 163-86.



But there were some moderate-minded traditionists who enjoyed the patronage of the Umayyad princes, and some of them did not consider it to be a sin to help the rulers of the day. But they did not overstep the limits of co-operation with their patrons, nor did they forge traditions in their favour. Among them may be included the traditionists like 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr, Rajā' b. Ḥayawa and Muḥammad b. Muslim al-Zuhri. They enjoyed the patronage of the caliphs.<sup>1</sup> But at the same time they kept up the purity and prestige of knowledge. The close association of some of them with the caliphs was disliked and criticised by certain traditionists, but their veracity and reliability have never been questioned by any of them. Among the modern European Orientalists also, Horowitz (having referred to the arguments and conclusions of Goldziher who considered 'al-Zuhri as a forger of traditions in favour of the Umayyads)<sup>2</sup> says: "That he (al-Zuhri) invented *Hadith* in order to promote the interest of the Umayyads is, however, un-acceptable".<sup>3</sup> As a matter of fact, al-Zuhri at times enraged some of the caliphs by quoting traditions against their interest to which (traditions) he stuck to the end in spite of the fury of his patrons.<sup>4</sup> Some of the supporters of the Umayyads, however, overstepped the limits of proper co-operation. They used not only fair, but also foul, means to further the interest of their patrons. Among them are included men like 'Awāna b. al-Ḥakam and others who forged traditions in favour of the Umayyads, and tried to propagate the forged traditions among the people. But their foul deeds have been denounced by the pious and strict traditionists, and they have been branded as forgers and liars. As such therefore, they have left little mark on *Hadith* literature.

During the reign of the Abbasids who tried to reconcile the pious Muslims by their outwardly religious appearance, although the whole of the extant standard literature of *Hadith*

(1) JBI, i, 163-86.

(2) MSt, ii, 38-40.

(3) IsC, ii, 48.

(4) *Ibid.* 41-42.



evolved and developed during this period, still the attitude of the various classes of the traditionists towards the caliphs continued to be exactly the same as it was during the reign of the Umayyads.<sup>1</sup> Some of the traditionists like Mālik b. Anas,<sup>2</sup> Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, and others suffered under the Abbasid rulers.<sup>3</sup> Some others, e.g. al-Bukhārī, were put to trouble by their officials.<sup>4</sup> Some, e.g. Muslim and others, had been indifferent to the benefit of their favour. None of the compilers of the important collections of *Hadīth* received or expected any help or encouragement from these generous and benevolent caliphs.

### 5. THE EXACTITUDE OF THE TRADITIONISTS

No other literature can compete with *Hadīth* literature in the attempt after exactitude made by its pious votaries. We have seen how all the various compilers of *Hadīth* collections tried to reproduce exactly what they had learnt from their teachers. There certainly had been numerous forgers of *Hadīth*. But they had little to do with *Hadīth* literature. Those who have been mainly responsible for its development tried sincerely to be as exact as was possible. Some had been faithful only to the ideas without attaching much importance to the expressions. Others tried to be faithful to the ideas as well as to the words. They reproduced each word and letter, including the diacritical marks and the vowel points, without deviating in the least from what they had received. al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī in the first few chapters of his *Kitāb al-Kifāya* has shown how exact some of the traditionists had been with regard to every word and letter in a *Hadīth*.<sup>5</sup> Ibn 'Umar did not like to change the order of words in a sentence even when it did not affect the meaning in the least. Mālik b. Anas tried to be exact about each and every letter. Ibn

(1) See *Supra*. p. 154.

(2) WA, No. 560.

(3) \* See *supra*, 65 ff.

(4) *Ibid*, 90.

(5) KKi, OPC.



Sirīn did not approve of making corrections in a *Hadīth* even in those cases in which there was certainty of a mistake by the reporter.<sup>1</sup>

The care and exactitude of the leading traditionists is further illustrated by the principles which had been established by them about the methods of the acquisition of knowledge and the duties of its teachers and students. These principles have been discussed since the second century of the Hījra, and they are mentioned in the various works on the '*Ulūm al-Hadīth* (the sciences of Tradition).

The first problem about the study of *Hadīth* is that of the age at which it may be commenced. The traditionists of Kūfa have fixed the age of 20; those of Baṣra, the age of 10; and those of Syria, the age of 30. But according to the majority of the later traditionists, the study of *Hadīth* may be commenced at the age of 5.<sup>2</sup>

In any case, the study of *Hadīth* should be preceded by that of Arabic grammar and language so that the mistakes that arise from their ignorance might be avoided.<sup>3</sup> 'Abd Allāh b. al-Mubārak, the famous traditionist, spent more money on learning Arabic language than on traditions. He attached more importance to the former than to the latter, and asked the students of *Hadīth* to spend on learning Arabic grammar twice as long time as on *Hadīth*. Hammād b. Salama is said to have remarked that he who takes to *Hadīth* without knowing grammar is like an ass which carries a sack without corn. Aṣma'ī was of opinion that he who studied *Hadīth* without learning grammar was to be counted among the forgers.<sup>4</sup> Shu'ba and 'Abbās b. al-Mughīra also are stated to have made similar remarks.<sup>5</sup> Sibwayh, the grammarian, took

(1) KKī.

(2) MIS, 49.

(3) TR, 164.

(4) MUd, i, 17, 26.

(5) TR, 164.



to the study of grammar, because his mistake in a *Hadīth* had been pointed out to him by Hammād b. Salama.<sup>1</sup>

Having learnt the preliminaries, the student should purge his mind of all worldly considerations. He should develop good character, seek the help of God in his efforts, and strain every nerve in the acquisition of knowledge. He should begin his study with the best teachers of his town, and carry it on by making journeys to the rest of the literary world, and by acquiring what is possessed by the various *Shuyūkh* (masters of the subject). But he should not run after the mere number of *Aḥādīth*. He should hear and write them down, should understand them, and should know their genuineness or weakness, their theological importance and implications, the proper significance of the words used in them, and the character of those through whom they have been handed down.

Of the actual process of learning *Hadīth*, the traditionists have mentioned the following eight forms:—

1. *al-Samāʿ*. The student may attend the lectures of a traditionist, which may be in the form of simple narration of traditions or accompanied by dictation of the same, either from memory or from a book.

2. *al-Qirāʾat*. One may read to a traditionist, the traditions which have been narrated or compiled by him. Or one may hear the traditions while they are recited by another student, to a traditionist (the teacher)—provided he is attentive to what is recited, or compares his own copy with what is recited.

3. *al-Ijāza*. To get the permission of a traditionist to narrate to others the traditions compiled by him. This may be granted in different ways, some of which are recognized by the majority as valid, and some of which are rejected.

4. *al-Munāwala*. To get the compilation of a traditionist together with his permission to narrate its contents to others

(1) MUd, iv, 135.



(which is recognized as valid by the majority of the traditionists), or without his permission to report the contents (which is declared as invalid by the majority).

5. *al-Mukātabah*. To receive by correspondence certain traditions from a traditionist — either with or without his permission to narrate them. to others.

6. *I'lām al-Rāwī*. The declaration of a traditionist to a student that he (the traditionist) received such and such traditions or book from such and such authority — without giving him (the student) permission to narrate them (or it).

7. *al-Waṣīyyah*. To get the works of a traditionist by his will at the time of his death.

8. To find certain traditions in a book without receiving them from any recognized authority.<sup>1</sup>

The first two of these methods are recognized by the traditionists as the best. The rest are declared as invalid by some, and as valid by others.

The student who gathers the knowledge of *Hadīth* by any one or more of the various methods, is not recognized as a traditionist unless he combines together with it the knowledge of the life and character of the narrators and of the degrees of the reliability of the various traditions and other connected matters. Such of them as combine all these and other qualities (to which reference has been made) are known as *al-Hāfiẓ* or *al-Muḥaddith*—according to the degree of perfection attained by them.<sup>2</sup>

Such students of *Hadīth* as attain mastery of it as well as that of connected subjects may deliver lectures on the subject, between the age of 40 and 80, once or twice or thrice a week, for no other consideration than the propagation of knowledge. Before going to the lectures, they should take a bath, perform

(1) MIS, 50-69; TR, 129-150; FM, 170-236.

(2) TR, 4-8.



ablutions and dress cleanly. They should take their seat in a prominent and elevated place, and deliver lectures while they are standing. They should keep perfect order during their lectures, and appoint their assistants who might repeat their words to such students as might not be able to follow the lectures clearly.

The lectures should be preceded by recitations from the Qur'ān, praise of God, and prayers for His Prophet who is the source of knowledge. After this, the lecturer should recite and dictate traditions, narrating one tradition from each of his teachers, giving preference to the short ones which have theological or legal importance, stating their narrators and the method by which they were received from them, introducing them with expressions particularly suited for the traditions received by the different methods. If his teacher had read out the traditions to him, he should begin with the word *Haddathanā* (he related to us) or *Akhbaranā* (he informed us), etc. If he or any of his fellow-students read out the traditions to his teacher who heard it, he should begin with the words *qara'tu 'ala...* (I read out to...) or *qurī'a 'alayhi w'ana' asma'u* (it was read out to him while I heard). In the case of the *Ijāza*, he should begin by saying: "I found it in the hand-writing of such and such a person" or "I found it in his book" or "in his own hand-writing", etc.

The lectures may be delivered either from memory if it be sufficiently strong, or from books provided the manuscripts are written either by the lecturer himself, or by any person of reliable character; and provided further that the reliability of the manuscripts is proved to the lecturer, with certainty. In case the lecturer finds any difference between the contents of the manuscript and what he remembers, or between his own version of a tradition and that of other traditionists, he should point it out to his students. In case the lecturer narrates the traditions not *verbatim* but according to the ideas conveyed by them, he should be well versed in the subject-matter—so that he might be certain that the change in expression would cause no change in the meaning. He should



also add at the end of every *Hadith* such words as might show that the words used in it were his own. In case he finds any mistake in a *Hadith* which he has received, he should narrate it first according to his correction, and then point out also how it was reported to him. If he received a tradition from more than one narrator, in different words conveying the same idea, he should narrate it, giving the name of every narrator and pointing out that the expressions used were by such and such narrators. In case he received a part of a tradition from one narrator, and another part from another narrator, he should point it out to his students. If there had been any negligence on the part of the lecturer when he received a tradition, which might have affected his knowledge, he should not fail to bring such negligence to the notice of his students. In short, it is a duty of the lecturer on *Hadith* to convey it to his students exactly as it was received by him, and to add his own comments on it, in such words as might not be mistaken for a part of the tradition. He is not allowed even to change the words *Rasūl Allāh* into *Nabī Allāh* (which convey more less the same idea). He should finish his discourse by relating instructive and attractive, historical, humorous stories exhorting his audience to piety, good manners and high character.<sup>1</sup>

The pious traditionists, however, tried to maintain the care and exactitude which they showed in the acquisition and propagation of traditions, also in writing them down, and laid down definite principles with regard to it—so that no mistake might be committed by the writers and readers of *Hadith*.

Such students of traditions as write them down are required to use clear, distinct and bold letters, each letter being distinctly written so that they may not be mistaken for other similar letters. The dots of the letters with points are to be properly placed, and those without them are to be made distinct with distinct additional signs (which are thoroughly

(1) TR, 159-70.



discussed in works on '*Ulūm al-Hadīth*'). Special attention is to be paid to rare and archaic words and proper names, which in addition to the text are also to be noted on the margin in distinct separate letters. Such expressions as 'Abd Allāh should be completely written in one and the same line. The various traditions are to be separated from one another by small circles in which dots may be put after the manuscript has been compared with its original copy. The genuineness of the genuine traditions, and the defects of the defective ones, are to be shown by special signs. If, for example, the chain of authority is broken in the case of a tradition, or if any part of a tradition contains any obvious or hidden defect, these parts should be marked in particular.

After the manuscript is completed, it should be carefully compared with the original; and all the mistakes of commission as well as of omission should be duly corrected. All the omissions should be put down on the right hand margin to which a line should be drawn from the word in the text after which the missing part should fall. The mistakes of commission should be either struck off or erased. But it is preferable to pen through them in such a way as to keep them legible, and also show them as struck off.

The writer should always follow in the text of his manuscript a particular version of a book or traditions. The differences in other versions and the criticism may be noted distinctly on the margin.

Such students as write down traditions at the dictation of their teachers are required to be extremely careful and exact in their writings and in putting dots wherever they may be necessary. They are also required to put down in a prominent part of the manuscript the names of their teachers together with other particulars about them, the names of all the fellow students who attended these lectures, as well as the time and place when and where these lectures were delivered.<sup>1</sup>

(1) MIS, 70-82; FM, 236-68; TR, 151-59.



All these particulars with regard to learning, teaching and writing down traditions have been treated and discussed by the traditionists since the second century of the Hijra with exhaustive, minute details, which show their care and exactitude which they wanted to maintain at every stage of the propagation of *Hadith*.

The *Hadith* literature, therefore, for its advanced system of *Isnād*, for the prominent part taken by women in its cultivation, for the unparalleled devotion of its votaries, and for their care and exactitude, may be said to be unique.

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## CHAPTER VII

### THE SCIENCES OF TRADITION

#### (<sup>'</sup>ULŪM AL-ḤADĪTH)

We have seen that every *Ḥadīth* consists of two parts: the *Isnād* (the chain of transmitters) and the *Matn* (text). Each of these two parts is of equal importance to a traditionist. The latter as a report of the sayings or doings of the Prophet, forms a basis of the Islamic rituals and laws; and the former constitutes the credentials of the latter. The traditionists, therefore, treat and consider the traditions with one and the same *Isnād* and different texts, as well as the traditions with one and the same text and different *Isnāds*, as entirely independent traditions. A critical study of traditions, therefore, likewise consists (according to the traditionists) of two parts: that of the *Isnād*, and that of the text.

In order to check the *Isnād* it is necessary to know the life and the career as well as the character of the various persons who constitute the various links in the chains of the different *Isnāds*. And in order to understand the exact significance of the text, and to test its genuineness, it is necessary to know the meaning of the various expressions used (some of which are rare and out of common use), and also to learn its relation to the text of the other traditions (some of which may be either corroborated or contradicted by it).

In connection with *Ḥadīth* literature, therefore, there have been developed by the Muslims various other branches of literature which are summarized in the various works on the *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*—like those of Abū Muḥammad al-Rāmhurmuzī (d. 360/970), Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī (d. 430/1038), al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 403/1012), al-Ḥākim (d. 405/1014), Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 643/1245) and many others. These are 100 in number, and each of them is said to be important enough to be treated as an independent branch of knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

(1) TR, 9.



Some of them are connected only with the *Isnād* of the traditions and its criticism; some relate to their text; and some relate to both the *Isnād* as well as the text. We will deal here with only two of them, and discuss their evolution and influence on *Hadīth* literature.

### ASMA' AL-RIJĀL

(BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM OF THE NARRATORS OF HADĪTH)

One of the most important and richest branches of literature, which originated and developed in connection with the *Isnād* in *Hadīth*, is that relating to the biography of the narrators of traditions. It is commonly known as *Asmā' al-Rijāl*. In it are included all the various works which deal with (i) the chronology; (ii) the biography; and (iii) the criticism of the narrators of traditions or of any class of the narrators, or with any such aspect of their life as may be helpful in determining their identity, veracity and reliability.

(i) *Chronology*. The consideration of chronology commenced and developed among the Muslims at an early period in the history of Islam. There is a difference of opinion as to the exact time when it was first used by the Muslims. According to some authorities, dates were introduced into official correspondence by the Prophet himself in the fifth year of the Hijra, when a treaty was concluded between him and the people of Najrān.<sup>1</sup> But it is generally held that this was done by 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb—with the unanimous advice of a congregation of important Muslims—in the sixteenth or the seventeenth year of the Hijra.<sup>2</sup> The same farsighted caliph followed a chronological principle in the award of pensions to the various groups of Muslims of his time according to their priority in the acceptance of the (Islamic) faith, which (principle) was already accepted by the Community as a point of great distinction. Its use assumed greater importance on account of the necessity of an explanation of the historical verses in the Qur'ān, and of the determination of the dates

(1) TR, 256.

(2) *Ibid. loc. cit.*



of revelation of the legal verses, in order that it might be decided which of them had been cancelled and which of them were still in force.

They followed in their chronology the lunar calendar, which had been adopted by the Arabs long before the advent of Islam. But originally, at least the Meccans among the Arabs followed the solar calendar, which is evident from their division of the year according to the seasons, and also from the significance of the names of the various months, and is proved conclusively by J. Wellhausen in his scholarly book, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*.<sup>1</sup>

(ii) *Biography*. The composition of the biographical works with a perfect chronological order of the events, however, was commenced by the Muslims before the end of the first century of the Hijra.

Horovitz has shown that Ābān (d. between 86 and 105 A.H.), the son of the caliph 'Uthmān; 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr (26-94/646-712); and Shurayḥ (who is said to have been born in 20 A.H. and lived more than 100 years) had collected a good deal of material relating to the biography of the Prophet. Soon after them, Wahb wrote a book on the *Maghāzi*—a fragment of which is preserved at Heidelberg in Germany.<sup>2</sup> Wahb was followed by numerous biographers of the Prophet during the second and third centuries. The fragment and the text of such of these biographies as are still extant reveal a thorough use of the chronological system by their authors.

(iii) *Criticism of the Narrators*. A general critical estimate of the reliability of the narrators, based on their life and character, in order to determine the veracity of their reports, appears to have been taken into consideration earlier than the period when the *Isnād* became long enough to admit the application of the chronological method. Ibn 'Adī (d. 365/975) in the introduction to his book, *Kāmil*, has given a general

(1) PP. 94-101. Also see EI<sup>ss</sup>, "Tā'rikh", W. Hartner.

(2) IsC, i, 550, 558; TIS, v, 133.



survey of the development of the criticism of the narrators since its beginning till his own time. According to him, narrators had been criticised by 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās, 'Ubāda b. al-Ṣāmit and Anas, among the Companions; by al-Sha'bī, Ibn Sirīn and Sa'īd b. al-Musaiyib, among the Followers. But it did not become common till the next generation, because most of the narrators till then had been reliable. In the next generation, when the narrators of doubtful reliability grew in number, their criticism also assumed greater importance. About the middle of the second century, therefore, A'mash, Shu'ba and Mālik criticised a large number of the narrators, and declared some of them as weak, and some as unreliable. About the same time flourished two of the greatest critics of *Rijāl*—Yahya b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān (d. 198/813) and 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Mahdī (d. 198/813) whose verdict on the narrators' reliability or unreliability was accepted as final. Where they differed in their opinion about the reliability of a narrator, the traditionists used their own discretion in the matter. They were followed by another class of critics which included Yazīd b. Hārūn and others.<sup>1</sup>

Chronology, biography and criticism, having developed among the Muslims at an early period in the history of Islam, were applied by them to the *Isnād* in traditions—in order to check their genuineness and determine the reliability of their narrators. Chronology was taken by the traditionists as an important expedient to determine the genuineness of the *Isnād*. "Whenever you have a doubt about the veracity of a narrator", remarks Ḥafṣ b. Ghiyāth (d. 160/776), "test him by means of the years" (i.e. the dates of birth and death). Sufyān al-Thaurī is said to have declared: "When the narrators forged traditions, we used the *Tā'rikh* (chronology) against them".<sup>2</sup> Ḥassān b. Zayd observed: "We never used against the forgers any device more effective than the *Tā'rikh*".<sup>3</sup>

(1) 'Adī's *Kāmil* has been quoted by Jazā'irī in TN, p. 114.

(2) MIS, 154.

(3) TR, 254.



Chronology had been, therefore, used as early as the second century by the traditionists in order to test the truth of the statement of the narrators. Some examples of it are cited by Muslim in the introduction to his *Ṣaḥīḥ*; and a good many of them are found in the works on *Asmā' al-Rijāl*.

The traditionists, however, having realized the importance of chronology, biography and criticism, compiled independent works dealing with the narrators of traditions in chronological order before the end of the second century. "Such registers of the narrators of traditions", says Otto Loth, "as had been chronologically arranged and in which every Muslim traditionist in general received a definite place, had been already in common use among the traditionists as indispensable hand-books in the second century".<sup>1</sup>

The beginning of the compilation of the works on *Asmā' al-Rijāl* is difficult to determine. But Ibn Nadīm has mentioned two books as *Kitāb al-Tā'rikh* in his *Fihrist*, in the discourse dealing with the works on the jurists and the traditionists. One of these books is by the great traditionist, 'Abd Allāh b. al-Mubārak; and the other, by Layth b. Sa'd (d. 165-75/781-91) an important traditionist of the Mālikī school.<sup>2</sup> These authors had little interest in history; and their works are not included in that section of the *Fihrist* in which historical works are dealt with. We may, therefore, count them among the earliest works on our subject. Horovitz is correct in his opinion that the earliest work on the subject was composed about the middle of the second century.<sup>3</sup> Among the products of the second century of Islam, however, must be included such works on our subject as the *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt*, *Kitāb Tā'rikh al-Fuqahā'*, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahā' w'al-Muḥaddithīn*, *Kitāb Tasmīyat al-Fuqahā' w'al-Muḥaddithīn*,<sup>4</sup> *Kitāb*

(1) ZDMG, xxiii, 600.

(2) FN, 228, 199.

(3) *Der Islam*, viii, 47.

(4) FN, 99f.



*Ṭabaqāt man rawa 'an al-Nabī* by al-Wāqidi and Haytham b. 'Adī—both of whom died in the beginning of the third century, and whose works served as important sources to the later writers on the subject—e.g. Ibn Sa'd (d. 230/844), Ibn al-Khayyāt (d. 240/854) and others.<sup>1</sup>

As all the early works on our subject have been lost, it is impossible to determine definitely their general plan and the nature of their contents. But from the later works which are based on them and which we have received, and from the general tendencies of the traditionists of the time, it may be inferred that their contents mainly consisted of: (a) short descriptions of the genealogies and the dates of their birth and death, (b) some biographical matters relating to the narrators; and (c) a short criticism of their reliability together with the opinions of the important authorities about them. These are the main features of the contents of the *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Sa'd which will be described later; and these matters, as we have seen, had received serious attention of the traditionists before the end of the second century of the Hijra.

The compilation of the biographies of the narrators of traditions, being begun in the second century of the Hijra, was continued with zeal and vigour in the following centuries. In the third century, not only various specialists in the subject—e.g. Ibn Sa'd (d. 230/844), Khalifa b. al-Khayyāt, Ibn Abi Khaythama (d. 279/892) and others—but also almost every traditionist of reputation compiled simultaneously with his collection of traditions, some biographies of their narrators also. The compiler of each of the six standard works in *Hadīth* literature has to his credit one or more important books on the biography of the narrators of traditions also.<sup>2</sup> Some other traditionists also—e.g. 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Abi Shayba (d. 235/849), 'Alī b. al-Madīnī, and many others—wrote on the subject.

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) FN, 230, 231, 233; KZ, ii, 141.



During the fourth and the succeeding centuries, the compilation of the biographies of traditionists appears to have become a fashion of the time throughout the vast Islamic dominions. Arabia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt, Africa, Spain and India all produced numerous biographers of the traditionists, who compiled huge works on the subject.

The works on the *Asmā' al-Rijāl* helped the growth of general biographical literature in the Arabic language. There were compiled in Arabic the biographies of poets, grammarians, physicians, saints, jurists, judges, calligraphers, lovers, misers, idiots, and of other classes of people. The biographical literature in Arabic is, therefore, extremely rich. "The glory of the Muhammadan literature", says Dr. Sprenger, "is its literary biographies...There is no nation, nor has there been any, which like them, has during twelve centuries narrated the life of every man of letters".<sup>1</sup> Margoliouth remarks: "The biographical literature of the Arabs was exceedingly rich; indeed it would appear that in Baghdad when an eminent man died, there was a market for biographies of him, as is the case in the capitals of Europe in our time...The literature which consists in collected biographies is abnormally large, and it is in consequence easier for the student of the history of the caliphate, to find out something about the persons mentioned in the chronicles, than in any analogous case".<sup>2</sup>

The magnitude of these biographical dictionaries may be ascertained from the large number of men whose biographies they contain. Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt* contains the biographies of more than 4000 traditionists. al-Bukhārī's *Tā'rikh* deals with more than 42,000 traditionists. al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī in his History of Baghdad, gives short biographies of 7831 persons. Ibn 'Asākir in the eighty volumes of his History of Damascus, collected together the biographies of a much larger number of people. Ibn Ḥajar in his *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* and *Mizān al-I'tidāl*, summarized the biographical

(1) ITS, i, intro., p. i.

(2) ArH, 7f.



notices on 12,415 and 14,343 narrators of traditions respectively. These figures which may be easily collected from numerous other works on our subject, are sufficient to show the magnitude of biographical literature in Arabic.

The works on the *Asmā' al-Rijāl*, however, differ from one another in their scope, their general plan, and the detailed nature of their contents, according to the main object of their compilers and authors. Some of them contain extremely short notices on a particular class of narrators of traditions. Such is the *Ṭabaqāt al-Huffāz* of Dhahabī,<sup>1</sup> and various other works on weak or un-reliable narrators. Some of them deal with only their names, their *kunyas* and their titles or *nisbas*. To this class belong the various works on *Asmā'w' al-Kuna*, and the well-known *Kitāb al-Ansāb* of al-Sam'ānī. Some of them contain biographical details of all such narrators as lived in or visited any particular town—e.g. Aleppo, Baghdad, Damascus, etc. To this class belong the works of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Ibn al-'Asākir and others. Some of them deal with only the reliable or unreliable narrators—e.g. the *Kitāb al-Thiqāt* and the *Kitāb al-Du'afā'* of Ibn Ḥibbān and others. Some of them contain the biographies of only such narrators as find a place in any particular collection of traditions or in a group of them. To this class belong a large number of works which deal with the lives of the narrators on whom al-Bukhārī or Muslim or the authors of all the six standard works on *Hadīth* have relied.

The works on the *Asmā' al-Rijāl* may, therefore, be classified into two main groups: (1) the general works, and (2) the special works.

1. *General Works.* By the general works on the *Asmā' al-Rijāl* are meant such of them as contain the biographies of all the narrators, or at least of all the important ones among them, who had been known to their compilers. To this class belong most of the early works on the subject. The *Ṭabaqāt* of Muḥammad b. Sa'd, the three Histories of

(1) In Suyūṭī's abridgement.



al-Bukhārī, the History of Aḥmad b. Abī Khaythama, and many other works on the *Asmā' al-Rijāl*, which were compiled during the third century of the Hijra, and which contain the biographies of all the narrators, or at least of all the important ones among them, who had been known to their authors. The earliest of these works received by us is the *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr* by Ibn Sa'd. The life of its author has been admirably described by two distinguished German orientalist, Loth<sup>1</sup> and Sachau;<sup>2</sup> and I cannot do better than summarize their researches :

Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Sa'd b. Munī' al-Zuhri belonged to a family of Babylonian slaves of the family of the great traditionist, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās, who had granted liberty to them. Born at Baṣra, the great centre of *Hadīth* learning, Ibn Sa'd must have been attracted by the charms of the Tradition in pursuit of which he himself travelled through Kūfa, Mecca and Madīna where he must have stayed for quite a long time. At last, he came to Baghdad, the greatest centre of intellectual activity in his time. Here he came in close contact with Wāqidi, one of the early Arab historians. Ibn Sa'd worked as Wāqidi's literary assistant for a pretty long time, which gave him his title *kātib al-Wāqidi* (the secretary of Wāqidi), by which he is generally known. By his reputation in Baghdad as a historian and traditionist, Ibn Sa'd attracted a band of students who sat at his feet and studied Tradition and History with him. One of the most prominent among them was the great historian, al-Balādhuri who in his later career borrowed a great deal from Ibn Sa'd in his well known work *Futūḥ al-Bulḍān*. Ibn Sa'd died in the year 230-/844.

Ibn Sa'd, who possessed great learning and equally great love for it, also possessed a great love of books the possession and collection of which had already become a fashion among the Muslims. al-Khaṭīb. al-Baghdādī says:<sup>3</sup> "He possessed vast

(1) See *infra*, pp. 174 (n. 3) f.

(2) TIS, iii, part 1, editor's intro.

(3) TB, v, 321f.



learning, knew a large number of traditions, had great thirst for them, narrated a good many of them, and had collected a large number of books, particularly the rare ones, and those on *Hadīth* and *Fiqh*'. "Of the collections of the works of al-Wāqidī", adds al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, "which were in the possession of four persons during the time of Ibn Sa'd, his was the largest".

Ibn Sa'd made the best use of his vast learning and rich library in compiling his own works. Two of them—the *Ṭabaqāt* and the *Kitāb Akhbār al-Nabī*—have been mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm.<sup>1</sup> and a third, a smaller edition of the *Ṭabaqāt*, is mentioned by al-Nawawī<sup>2</sup> and others, but is not known to exist.

Ibn Sa'd's *Kitāb Akhbār al-Nabī* constitutes only a part of the *Ṭabaqāt*. It was compiled and completed by the author, but was handed down to posterity by his student, Hārith b. Muḥammad b. Abī Usāma (186-282/802-896).<sup>3</sup>

The *Ṭabaqāt* was completely planned and compiled by Ibn Sa'd, but could not be completed by him. He appears, however, to have read whatever he had written of this book, to his student, Ḥusayn b. Fahm (211-289/826-901), who is reported to have been a keen student of traditions and of the biographies of the narrators.<sup>4</sup> Ibn Fahm completed the book according to the plan of its author, added to it his short biographical notice as well as that of certain other narrators whose names had already been included by the author in the general plan of his work, and read it to his own students.

Both of these two books of Ibn Sa'd were received from his two students by some of their common disciples. One

(1) FN, 171.

(2) TA, 7; WA, No. 656.

(3) "I received this book from the beginning till the end of the part dealing with the life of the Prophet", says Hārith.

(4) TB, viii, 92 ff.



of them, Aḥmad b. Ma'rūf al-Khashshāb (d. 322/933), combined them together into one book of enormous size,<sup>1</sup> and read it out to his students. One of these students, Abū 'Umar Aḥmad b. 'Abbas (generally known as Ibn Ḥayyūya, 295-382/907-992) who is celebrated for his keen interest in the works on the early history of Islam and for the preservation of the early historical and biographical works of the Arabs, edited the whole work without making any change in its text.<sup>2</sup> His student, al-Jauharī (363-454/973-1062), handed it down to the posterity. Through him are traced back to the author all the extant manuscripts of this great work. All these manuscripts preserve the author's original arrangement of the contents.<sup>3</sup>

(1) TB, v, 160.

(2) TB, iii, 121.

(3) This new edition of the *Ṭabaqāt* had been an object of keen study by a crowd of students of the *Asmā' al-Riḍāl* for more than three centuries, as is shown by its *Ljāza* and *Isnād* found in its various manuscripts which have come down to us. But since about the end of the eighth century A.H., on account of its enormous size and the appearance of many short and handier books on the various branches of *Asmā' al-Riḍāl*, the interest in it began to decline, and at last its copies became scarce. No complete manuscript of the book is now known to exist (ZDMG, xxiii, 611).

But this decline of literary interest in the history and sciences of Islam in the Islamic world itself has been made up by the interest of the modern European Orientalists in the ancient and mediaeval history and literature of the East, who during the last two centuries have rendered greater literary service to its literature than its own people. The *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Sa'd also did not escape their searching attention. Among them, Dr. Sprenger and Prof. Wüstenfeld had been the first to realize the great importance of the Book of Classes. They published articles describing its manuscripts and inviting the Orientalists' attention to its value as a source for early history of Islam (*Ibid.* iv.) They used it as an important source for their own work. Other Orientalists also—e.g. Sir William Muir and Th. Nöldeke—demonstrated its great value by drawing upon it in their works. But a thorough and minute study of Ibn Sa'd was reserved for another German scholar, Otto Loth, who published in 1869 his masterly treatise, *Das Classenbuch des Ibn Sa'ds*, and a scholarly article on the Origin and Meaning



On the basis of all the various known manuscripts of Ibn Hayyūya's edition, the great Book of Classes was edited by an enthusiastic band of German scholars, and it was published by the Prussian Academy of Sciences in about 20 years.

According to this printed edition, in spite of various *lacunae*, the book contains over and above a detailed biography of the Prophet, the biographical notices of about 4300 narrators of various generations down to 238/852, in the following order :—

Vol. I, part 1. Genealogy of Muḥammad and his biography down to his migration to Madīnah. Ed. by E. Mitwoch.

of *Tabaqāt* (ZDMG, xxiii, 593-614), describing the Gotha and the Berlin manuscripts of the book, the nature of their contents, the origin and history of the *Tabaqāt* class of biographical dictionaries, and the place of the work of Ibn Sa'd among them, and discussing its importance as a rich mine of valuable material concerning the history of Islam. It was Loth who paved the way for the edition of this huge book.

But its enormous size prevented its edition and publication for a long time. For 18 years after the publication of the treatises of Loth, no one thought of editing or publishing the book. It was in June 1887 that the Prussian Academy of Science resolved to publish the work, and put Prof. Sachau in charge of it. Sachau took it up with his usual zeal and energy. Within a year were discovered 5 other manuscripts of the book which had not been known to Loth. They were all collected together with the help of scholars, librarians and Government officials, and in 1898 their collation and edition was begun by a distinguished enthusiastic band of German scholars. In 1904 were published the 8th and the 3rd volumes of the great book. The other volumes followed, and by the publication of the 7th volume in 1918 was completed the edition of the text.

Thus by the supreme aid of the great literary interest of the Prussian Academy of Sciences under the guiding influence and active sympathy of Prof. Sachau, with the help of various libraries in the East and the West, and the continuous efforts of about a dozen of German Orientalists, was published the great Book of Classes in more than 20 years (On some more recent indices of the book which have appeared since 1920, see the art. "Ibn Sa'd" in *Elss*).

A more recent reproduction of the German Edition of the *Tabaqāt* has been published (in 8 vols.) at Beirut (1376-1377/1957-1958).



Vol. I, part 2. Biography of the Prophet after his migration to Madīnah and various matters relating to it. Ed. by E. Mitwoch and Ed. Sachau.

Vol. II, part 1. The various campaigns of the Prophet. Ed. by J. Horovitz.

Vol. II, part 2. Sickness and death of the Prophet. Elegies written on his death by various poets, and the biographies of the Muslim jurists and readers of the Qur'ān who lived in Madīnah during the Prophet's life-time and just after his death. Ed. by J. Schwally. 1912.

Vol. III, part 1. Biographies of the Refugees who took part in the Battle of Badr. Ed. by E. Sachau. 1904. Part 2 of this volume (ed. J. Horovitz, 1904) deals with the same class of persons.

Vol. IV, part 1. Biographies of such early converts to Islam as did not take part in the Battle of Badr, but had migrated to Abyssinia, and later on took part in the Battle of Uhud. Ed. by J. Lippert. 1906.

Vol. IV, part 2. Biographies of other Companions who were converted to Islam before the conquest of Mecca. Ed. by J. Lippert. 1908.

Vol. V. Biographies of the *Tābi'ūn* (Followers) who lived in Madīnah. Ed. by K. V. Zettersteen. 1905.

Vol. VI. Biographies of the Companions and the other jurists and traditionists who settled down and lived in Kūfa. Ed. by K. V. Zettersteen. 1909.

Vol. VII, part 1. Biographies of the Companions and other jurists and traditionists who lived in Baṣra. Ed. by B. Meissner. 1915.

Vol. VII, part 2. Biographies of the Companions and other jurists and traditionists of Baghdad, Syria, Egypt, Africa, etc. Ed. by E. Sachau. 1908.



Vol. VIII. Biographies of the women narrators including the Companions and the Followers. Ed. by C. Brockelmann, 1904.

In this great work, no definite common plan has been followed in all the articles. But those on the Companions are long, and generally contain their genealogy both on their father's and mother's side, the names of their wives and children, the period of their conversion to Islam, the part taken by them in the important events during the Prophet's lifetime, the dates of their death, and other matters connected with their habits, and biographies which were considered by the traditionists to be of importance. Of course, the reader is very often disappointed with regard to important biographical matters which he naturally may expect. But at the same time, he very often comes across important historical matters which he may not have expected. All these details, however, are entirely wanting in the articles on the later narrators, which do not exceed one or two sentences. Many of them are altogether blank, from which fact it has rightly been inferred that these parts were meant by Ibn Sa'd to serve as notes to be developed at some later date, but he died before completing his work.

As Prof. Sachau says, Ibn Sa'd has shown in his work impartiality and honesty, thoroughness and minuteness, and objectivity and originality.<sup>1</sup> His impartiality and honesty have been generally acknowledged. Just as in spite of being a Maulá of the Hāshimites, he took no part in their party politics, so in his articles on the various persons he gave no expression to his personal relation to or prejudice for or against any one, and recorded in simple, unvarnished style all that he knew, and considered of importance about them. His thoroughness and minuteness is abundantly shown by his constant reference to the various versions of an event as well as to the differences among his authorities. His objectivity is illustrated by the want of the least irrelevant material in his

(1) TIS, iii, 1, editor's intro., pp. xxx *et seq.*



work. His originality is shown by his sub-classification of the narrators according to the various provinces in which they lived, and the general statement of the *Isnāds* of the various versions of an event before describing them and the entire absence of them in certain parts, all of which are ascribed to his own ingenuity.<sup>1</sup> He has been compared by Sachau with Plutarch—the difference in their works being due to the fact that Plutarch formed the last link in a long chain of biographers whose contributions to the art he had inherited, whereas Ibn Sa'd had been one of the pioneers in the field.

Be it as it may, the *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Sa'd is one of the earliest extant works on *Asmā' al-Rijāl*, containing biographical notices of most of the important narrators of the most important period in the history of traditions. It is a rich mine of many-sided, valuable information about the early history of Islam. It may be described not only as the most important extant work on the subject, but also as one of the most important works in Arabic literature in general. Since the beginning of the fourth century A.H., it has been used as a source by a large number of authors on Arabian history and biography. al-Balādhurī,<sup>2</sup> al-Ṭabarī,<sup>3</sup> al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Ibn al-Athīr, al-Nawawī<sup>4</sup> and Ibn Ḥajar<sup>5</sup> used it as an important source for their works, and al-Suyūṭī prepared an epitome of it. As a general biographical dictionary of the narrators it appears to have always occupied a unique position in the *Asmā' al-Rijāl*. The other works of the *Ṭabaqāt* class dealt only with particular classes of the narrators.

#### KITĀB AL-TĀ'RĪKH OF AL-BUKHĀRĪ

Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt* was soon followed by the works of al-Bukhārī who claimed to have possessed some biographical

(1) ZDMG, xxiii, 604-605; TIS, iii, 1, pp. xxxvii-xxxviii.

(2) OIS, i, intro., p. 9.

(3) ATb, i, 1113-16. Cf. TIS, i, 1, pp. 28, 29.

(4) TA, 7.

(5) ITS, i, 2.



knowledge about every narrator of traditions. He compiled three books on the history of the narrators in general. The largest of these is said to have contained the biographical notices of more than 40,000 narrators. But no complete manuscript of the book is known to exist. Only various parts of it are preserved in certain libraries on the basis of which the *Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif*, Hyderabad (India) has prepared a text of the book, and published it.

2. *Biographical dictionaries of particular classes of narrators.* Almost simultaneously with the biographical dictionaries of the narrators in general, was begun the compilation of those of particular classes of them. The most important of them are :—

- i. those containing the biographies of the Companions;
- ii. those containing the biographies of the narrators who lived in or visited any particular town or province; and
- iii. those containing the biographies of the narrators belonging to the various schools of the jurists.

#### i. THE BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARIES OF THE COMPANIONS

These constitute the vital part of the *Asmā' al-Rijāl*. But no independent book on the subject appears to have been written before the third century of the Hijra, when the great traditionist, al-Bukhārī, compiled the first independent biographical dictionary of the Companions<sup>1</sup> which must have been mainly based on :—

- (a) the *Sīrat* literature;
- (b) the numerous monographs relating to the various important events during the early period of the history of Islam;

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(1) ITS, i, 1.



- (c) a large number of traditions containing biographical material relating to the Companions,
- (d) and the earlier general works on the *Asmā' al-Rijāl*.

al-Bukhārī was followed by numerous authors during the different periods in the history of Islam, who produced a vast literature on the subject. Abū Ya'la Aḥmad b. 'Alī (201-307/816-919), Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd Allāh al-Baghawī (213-317/828-929), the great traditionist and copyist, Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar b. Aḥmad<sup>1</sup> (commonly known as Ibn Shāhīn, 297-385/909-995), one of the most prolific writers of his time (who spent more than 700 *dirhams* on ink only),<sup>2</sup> Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Yahya b. Manda (d. 301/913), Abū Nu'aym Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh (336-403/947-1012), who has been described as one of the best traditionists,<sup>3</sup> Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (368-463/978-1070) of Cordova, a contemporary of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, and the greatest traditionist of his time in the West,<sup>4</sup> Abū Mūsa Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr (501-581/1107-1185), and many others produced an extensive literature on the biographies of the Companions.

The results of the researches of all these scholars were collected together in the seventh century A.H. by the well-known historian and traditionist, 'Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr (555-630/1160-1230) in his book, *Usd al-Ghāba*, which was based mainly on the works of Ibn Manda, Abū Nu'aym, Abū Mūsa and Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (whose *Istī'āb* contained the biographies of only 300 Companions, and to which a supplement was written by Ibn Fathūn, which contained the biographical notices of about the same number of Companions).<sup>5</sup> Ibn al-Athīr, however, does not follow his sources blindly.

Having discussed in the introduction the chief sources of his book and its general plan, Ibn al-Athīr has defined the

(1) TB, x, 111-117.

(2) *Ibid.* xi, 267.

(3) TH, xiii, 62.

(4) WA, No. 847.

(5) KZ, i, 277.



term *Ṣaḥābīs*, has given a short sketch of the biography of the Prophet, and has put together in the alphabetical order the biographies of 7,554 Companions, some of whom were discovered by him through his independent researches. In the various articles, he has generally given the names of the Companions, their *kunyas*, their genealogy and certain biographical matters relating to them. When he differs from his predecessors, he discusses the matter at length, gives reasons in his own support, and explains the causes of the mistakes made by his predecessors. In spite of many repetitions in it, the *Usd al-Ghāba* has been generally appreciated and accepted by the traditionists as a reliable authority on its subject. Several biographers—e.g. al-Nawawī, al-Dhahabī, al-Qushayrī, al-Suyūṭī, and others—have prepared its epitomes.<sup>1</sup>

The *Usd al-Ghāba* was followed in the ninth century of the Hijra by a more comprehensive work on the subject—viz. the *Iṣāba fī Tam'yīz al-Ṣaḥāba*. Its author, Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-Faḍl b. 'Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (773-852/1371-1448) was the greatest literary figure of his time. He was born at old Cairo in 773. He lost both his mother and his father (who was a jurist) when he was a mere infant. He was brought up by one of his relatives who was a business man. But the little orphan was endowed by nature with strong intellectual powers and great tenacity of purpose. In spite of great difficulties in his way, he stuck to his literary pursuits, and soon excelled in Arabic language and literature as well as in all the various Islamic sciences and Arabic calligraphy. To *Ḥadīth* particularly he devoted a considerable part of his life. For 10 years he sat for its sake at the feet of the well known traditionist, Zayn al-Dīn 'Irāqī (725-806/1351-1404) who had reintroduced into the teaching of traditions the old method of *Imlā'* (dictation), and had brought the study of *Ḥadīth* back to its former glory. Having finished his studies, Ibn Ḥajar settled down at Cairo in 1403, and devoted himself to the service of *Ḥadīth* and the connected sciences. His authority as a traditionist was recognized

(1) TR, 32; KZ, i, 278 f.



by his contemporaries, and he was appointed as its professor in several educational institutions. He also served as a judge — a post he accepted after refusing it several times. He died in 852/1404.

He left about 150 of his incomplete and complete compositions and compilations which show his versatile genius. The *Fath al-Bārī*, a commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, is described as a work by which was paid the great debt which the literary world of Islam owed to the great work of al-Bukhārī for six centuries.

In the *Iṣāba*, Ibn Ḥajar has put together the results of the labours of all his predecessors in the field of the biographies of the Companions, criticising them in certain cases, and adding to them the results of his own researches. He has divided his book into four parts:—

Part I. Such persons as are mentioned in any tradition — genuine or fair or weak — directly or indirectly, to be Companions.

Part II. Such persons as were too young when the Prophet died, but were born during his life-time in the family of the Companions, which leads to the presumption that they fulfilled the necessary conditions of being one of them.

Part III. Such persons as are known to have lived both before and after the advent of Islam, but are not known to have ever associated with the Prophet. These persons have never been known to be Companions but they are mentioned in some of the works on the life of the Companions simply because they lived in the same period with them.

Part IV. This part contains the biographies of such persons as are wrongly mentioned in some of the biographical dictionaries as Companions.

## ii. THE BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARIES OF THE NARRATORS WHO LIVED IN OR VISITED ANY PARTICULAR TOWN OR PROVINCE

Another huge set of biographical dictionaries of narrators had been completed according to places or provinces where



they lived or which they visited. The number of such dictionaries is large. Not only almost all the provinces, but almost every important town, had not only one or two but several biographers who collected together the biographies of every important traditionist or man of letters who either lived in it or visited it. Mecca, Madīnah, Baṣra, Kūfah, Wāsit, Damascus, Antioch, Alexandria, Qayrawān, Cordova, Maṣīl, Aleppo, Baghdād, Iṣfahān, Bukhara, Merv, etc. all had their historians and biographers of their men of letters.<sup>1</sup>

Many of these provincial historians dealt with the political history of these provinces. Many of them dealt mainly with the biographies of their men of letters in general and those of the narrators and the traditionists in particular. Many of the early biographical dictionaries, which contained the biographies of the important Muslim scholars of particular places (since their conquest by the Muslims till the time of the compilers), are supplemented by their successors with those of the eminent men of the later periods down to almost modern times.

One of the most important works of this type is al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's *Tā'rikh Baghdād* which is the earliest biographical dictionary of the men of letters—principally, traditionists

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- (1) For the importance of 'theological local historiography' reference may be made to the following passage (attributed to Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad, the author of *Ṭabaqāt al-Hamadḥāniyyīn*):

"When religious scholarship has been cultivated in a place and scholars lived there in ancient and modern times, the students of traditions there and all those interested in traditions should begin with a thorough study of the *Ḥadīth* of their home town...After the student knows what is sound and what is unsound in their traditions, and is completely acquainted with the *Ḥadīth* scholars in his city and their conditions, he may occupy himself with the traditions of other places and with travelling in search of traditions".

(TB, i, 214: cited in HMH, p. 144)

On this question also see MIS, 100ff.



—who either belonged to, or delivered lectures in, the great metropolis.<sup>1</sup>

al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (392-463 A.H.), whose full name was Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. 'Alī, was the son of a Khaṭīb of a village near Baghdad. He was born in the year 392/1002, and began the study of *Ḥadīth* at the age of 11. He acquired it at the various centres of learning in Mesopotamia, Syria, Arabia, and Persia; and soon he gained excellence in the various Islamic sciences, particularly, the *Asmā' al-Rijāl* and *Ḥadīth*. He delivered lectures on *Ḥadīth* in Damascus, Baghdād and other places, and some of his teachers (e.g. al-Azhārī and al-Barqānī) accepted him as an authority on traditions, and received them from him. Finally, he settled down in Baghdād, where his authority on *Ḥadīth* was recognized by the caliph al-Qā'im and his minister Ibn Maslama (d. 450/1058), who had ordered that no preacher should narrate in his sermon any tradition that was not approved by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī. Here he read out almost all his books to his students, and here he died in 463/1071.

His life in Baghdād had not been altogether uneventful. During the revolt of al-Basāsīrī (450/1058) by whom Ibn Maslama was killed, al-Khaṭīb also suffered much. He had to leave the town and wander about in Syria for some time; and when after the execution of the rebel he returned to Baghdād in 451, he suffered at the hands of the Ḥanbalites—on account of his leaving the Ḥanbalī school and joining the Shāfi'ite school, and also on account of his liberal views towards the Ashā'irah and the Scholastic philosophers. Many treatises against him by the Ḥanbalites, are mentioned by Ḥājī Khalifa. al-Khaṭīb, however, had been fortunate in having attained all his great desires—namely, (1) to read out his great History of Baghdād to his students in that town;

(1) The only earlier history of the city by Tayfūr Aḥmad b. Abī Tāhir (204-280/819-983) of which only the sixth volume has been known, lithographed and translated into German by H. Keller, deals with the history of the Caliphs.



and (2) to be buried by the side of the grave of al-Bishr al-Hāfi (150-227/767-841).

al-Khaṭīb compiled 56 large and small books and treatises a list of which is given by Yāqūt in his *Mu'jam al-Udabā'*.<sup>1</sup> The most important of these works is his *Tā'rikh Baghdād*. In this monumental work (which he read out to his students in the year 461), having given the topography of Baghdād, Ruṣāfa, and al-Madā'in (Ptesiphon), which has been fully utilised by Le Strange in his learned book on Baghdad, al-Khaṭīb compiled together the biographies of 7831 eminent men and women (chiefly, traditionists) who were either born in Baghdad, or who came to it from other places and delivered lectures (on traditions). He has also described some important visitors to the city. He gives their names, *kunya*, dates of death, and certain other biographical matters, and the opinions of important traditionists about their reliability.

In the arrangement of the various articles, al-Khaṭīb gave the pride of place to the Companions. They are followed by those having the name Muḥammad. In the other articles alphabetical order has been followed. The articles on those who are known by their *kunya*, and on women, are put at the end.

In this book al-Khaṭīb has shown his vast knowledge of *Hadīth* and of the *Asmā' al-Rijāl*, and has also demonstrated his impartiality and critical acumen. He always gives the source of his information, and very often discusses (in his notes) the reliability of the traditions quoted, and of the reports received by him; he tries to determine the facts without prejudice or partiality.<sup>2</sup>

al-Khaṭīb's description of Imām Aḥmad and al-Shāfi'i as 'master of the traditionists' and 'crown of the jurists' (respectively) for which he has been criticised, does not appear to be unfair. He is generally accepted as trustworthy, and is

(1) MUd, i, 248-249.

(2) TB, i, 224; ii, 521; iv, 176; vi, 101.



regarded as the greatest traditionist of his time in the East—as his contemporary of Cordova (Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr) is taken as the greatest traditionist of his time in the West.

al-Khaṭīb had brought his dictionary down to 450 A.H. His successors continued the work after him. al-Sam‘ānī (506-562/1113-1167), al-Dubaythī (558-637/1163-1239), Ibn al-Najjār (578-643/1183-1245) and others wrote supplements to his book compiling biographies of eminent men of Baghdād till their own times.<sup>1</sup>

#### HISTORY OF DAMASCUS BY IBN al-‘ASĀKIR

The entire plan of the History of Baghdad was followed by Ibn al-‘Asākir in his huge biographical dictionary of the eminent men of Damascus in 80 volumes which excited the wonder and admiration of the later writers.

Ibn al-‘Asākir, whose full name was Abū al-Qāsim ‘Alī b. al-Ḥasan b. Hibat Allāh b. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥusayn, was born in a respectable and literary family in Damascus in 499/1105. His father, his brother, his son and his nephew all are described by al-Subkī<sup>2</sup> as traditionists of some eminence. Some of his predecessors also appear to have taken part in the campaigns against the Crusaders which gave him the title of Ibn al-‘Asākir, by which he is generally known. Ibn al-‘Asākir, having prosecuted his early studies with his father and other teachers in Damascus, travelled widely and visited all the important centres of *Hadīth* learning, a long list of which is given by al-Subkī in his *Ṭabaqāt*. He sat at the feet of more than 1300 teachers of *Hadīth*, of whom more than 80 belonged to the fair sex. Finally, he settled down at Damascus, his native town, where he devoted himself wholly to the service of *Hadīth* and the connected subjects, compiling books and treatises, and delivering lectures on them in the college which had been founded for him by the great general and jurist, Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Zanjī who had offered him several posts, which he refused. He died in 571/1175.

(1) KZ, ii, 119f.

(2) TK, iv, 213, 320; v. 66, 148.



His keen intellect, sharp and retentive memory vast knowledge of traditions, sincerity and piety, and his devotion to traditions and the sciences of tradition were acknowledged by all his contemporaries. His successors also regarded him as one of the greatest and most reliable traditionists of his time. (To this the traditions related by him in praise of Damascus must be an exception).

He compiled a large number of important works; a long list of his works is given by Yāqūt in the *Mu'jam al- Udabā'*.<sup>1</sup> Many of these are still preserved in the various libraries in the East and in the West.

The most important and most voluminous of his works is the History of Damascus. Its compilation was taken up at the request of a friend of the author. But the work could not be continued on account of certain anxieties and sad events. The excessive desire of Nūr al-Dīn al-Zanjī, however, to see the work completed, induced the author to complete it during his old age.<sup>2</sup>

In this book, after giving a short history of Syria in general and of Damascus in particular, and after stating briefly the superiority of Syria to other places on the basis of certain traditions extolling Syria in general and Damascus in particular, and after describing its prophets and monasteries, Ibn al-'Asākir collected together the biographies of the eminent men and women of various classes (chiefly traditionists) who either lived in or visited Damascus. The biographical part begins with the articles on those whose names are Aḥmad, which are headed by a short biography of the Prophet of Islam. In the arrangement of all the articles, alphabetical order in the names has been observed without any preference being given to any class of men. At the end are added the articles on men whose names are not known according to the alphabetical order of their *kunya*, which are followed by those on the eminent women in the same order as in the case of men.

(1) MUd, v, 140-144.

(2) TD, i, 10f.



Like al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī and Ibn al-ʿAsākir, various other traditionists and historians collected together the biographies of men of letters in general, and of the narrators in particular, of various other towns. Ibn Manda (d. 301/911) and Abū Nuʿaym (336/403) of Iṣfahān collected together the biographies of the narrators who belonged to their town,<sup>1</sup> and the work of the latter is preserved in the libraries of Rampur, Constantinople and Leiden.<sup>2</sup> al-Ḥākim (321-405/933-1014) compiled those of the narrators who belonged to Nishāpūr, which has been admired by al-Subkī.<sup>3</sup> Abū al-Qāsim ʿUmar b. Aḥmad al-ʿUqaylī, generally known as Ibn al-ʿAdīm (588-660/1191-1262) collected together the biographies of eminent men, including a large number of traditionists, of Aleppo in about 30 volumes. It was supplemented by his different successors.<sup>4</sup> Abū Saʿd al-Samʿānī (506-562/1113-1167) compiled a biographical dictionary mainly of the traditionists of Merv in 20 volumes.<sup>5</sup> The traditionists of Wāsiṭ, of Kūfa, of Baṣra, of Hirāt, and Qazwīn and of many other towns found their biographers in Ibn al-Dubaythī<sup>6</sup> (558-637/1162-1239), Ibn al-Najjār,<sup>7</sup> Ibn Shabba<sup>8</sup> (173-263/789-876), Ibn al-Bazzāz,<sup>9</sup> and in al-Rāfi<sup>10</sup> respectively.

Over and above the biographical dictionaries of the traditionists and narrators living in particular towns, there were also collected together the biographies of the narrators living in certain provinces—e.g. Andalusia, Africa, Ṣanʿā, Egypt, Khurasan, etc.—by Ibn al-Farḍī, Ibn Bashkwāl, al-Ḥumaydī and others.

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- (1) WA, Nos. 32, 631.
  - (2) KT, 83; Cat. Ar. Mss., Leiden
  - (3) WA, No. 626; TK,
  - (4) KZ, ii, 125f.
  - (5) WA, No. 406.
  - (6) *Ibid.* No. 672.
  - (7) MÜd, i, 410; KZ, ii, 143.
  - (8) WA, No. 502.
  - (9) KZ, ii, 157.
  - (10) *Ibid.* pp. 140f.



## CHAPTER IX

### SCIENCES OF TRADITION—Contd.

#### (*‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*)

#### CRITICISM AND TECHNIQUES OF ḤADĪTH

Side by side with the *Ḥadīth* Literature, there also developed the methods of criticism and the techniques of *Ḥadīth*. It is natural for a reasonable person who may receive the report of an event in which he may be interested, to inquire about the character and reliability of the reporter as well as into the likelihood of the event which has been reported to him. In the Qur’ān, at any rate, we find clear indication of the criticism of the reporters of an event as well as of the likelihood of it. It emphasised the principle of the criticism of the reporters of an event in the verse (XLIX, 6): “O you who believe! If an unrighteous person comes to you with a report, look carefully into it”. The principle of the plausibility of a statement has also been indicated in the Qur’ān in several places. The accusation against ‘Ā’ishah has been described as an evident falsehood,<sup>1</sup> because her character was above all suspicion. The Qur’ān has also rejected as unreasonable and unfounded, the theory of the sonship of Ezra and of Jesus, which was asserted by the Jews and the Christians.<sup>2</sup>

The Prophet (Muḥammad) also criticised many of the reporters, and made fun of superstitious beliefs of the Jews and of the pagan Arabs as unreasonable and foolish.

After the Prophet’s death, when his *Aḥādīth* were sought after and were reported by many of his Companions, several Companions criticised some of the reporters and rejected some of their reports. ‘Alī said about the report of a *Ḥadīth* by Mu‘qil b. Sinān that he could not accept the report of an uncultured, solvenly Beduin.<sup>3</sup> ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb

(1) Qur’ān, xxiv, 12.

(2) *Ibid.* ix, 30.

(3) NA, 180; JT (Ah), ii, 197.



said in the presence of many Companions that he could not give up the Book of God and the practice of His Prophet because of the report of a woman (Fāṭimah bint Qays), for no one could tell whether she was right or wrong, and whether she remembered (what she reported) or had forgotten.<sup>1</sup> 'Ammār b. Yāsir once reported a *Hadīth* of the Prophet with regard to *Tayammum* in an assembly of the Companions in which 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb was also present. On hearing the *Hadīth*, Umar said to 'Ammār: "Fear God".<sup>2</sup> This shows that 'Umar did not accept what 'Ammār had reported. The *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim contains a report in which Ibn 'Abbās criticised numerous 'judgments' of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.<sup>3</sup> When Maḥmūd b. al-Rabī' reported in an assembly of the Companions that the Prophet had said that he who professed that there was no God but Allāh would not be put into hell-fire, Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī remarked that he did not think that the Prophet ever had said any such thing.<sup>4</sup> Many other instances of the criticism of the reporters of *Hadīth* by their fellow-Companions (e.g. 'Ā'ishah, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, Ibn 'Abbās and others) may be easily gathered from works on *Hadīth* and the *Asmā' al-Rijāl*. These criticisms of the Companions against one another show that they are not above criticism. As a matter of fact, according to the principles accepted by most of the Sunnī Muslim scholars, no one except the Prophets is infallible. And even the Prophets are liable to commit mistakes in matters which do not concern the religions revealed to them.

The practice of criticising the *Aḥādīth* of the Prophet and their reporters (by the Companions) was followed by the traditionists of the later generations. Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj, Yahyā b. Sa'id al-Qaṭṭān, 'Alī b. al-Madīnī, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and many other traditionists criticised the reporters of the *Hadīth*, pointed out their character, and fixed up the

(1) JT, i, 141.

(2) SM, i, 61 (*B. al-Tayammum*).

(3) *Ibid.* i, 10.

(4) SB, i, 141.



degree of their reliability. Thus there developed in Arabic two important branches of literature: (1) *'Ilm Riwāyat al-Hadīth* which is also called *Muṣṭalaḥ al-Hadīth* (the science of narration or techniques of *Hadīth*); (2) *'Ilm al-Jarḥ w'al-Ta'dīl* (the science of criticism of the reporters).

1. The earliest treatise received by us containing matters connected with the *Riwāyat* or transmission of *Hadīth* is the *al-Risālah* of al-Shāfi'ī (767-820 A.D.), which deals mainly with the jurisprudence of the Shāfi'ī system of Islamic law. It was followed by the works of Abū Muḥammad al-Ramhurmuzī (d. cr 350/961), al-Ḥākim (d. 403/1012), Abū Nu'aym (745/1038) and of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (1002-1071) who systematized the matter described by his predecessors, in his *Kitāb al-Kifāyah*. He was followed by Qādī 'Iyād (d. 1139) and Abū Ḥafṣ, each of whom wrote a treatise on the subject. After them, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 643/1245) compiled together the results of the works of all the previous writers on the subject, adding to them some of his own observations in his book known as *Kitāb 'Ulūm al-Hadīth*. He was followed by numerous writers on the subject, like Ibn Kathīr (1302-1372), al-'Irāqī and others.<sup>1</sup> The *Fath al-Mughīth*, which is al-Sakhāwī's commentary on the *Alfiya* of al-'Irāqī, and the *Tadrīb al-Rāwī*, which is a commentary on the *Taqrib* of al-Nawāwī, contain exhaustive treatment of *'Ilm Riwāyat al-Hadīth*.

al-Shāfi'ī and others have described the qualifications necessary for a transmitter of *Hadīth* as follows:—"He (the transmitter) must be of firm faith, well known for his truthfulness in what he reported. He should understand its contents, should know well how the change in expression affects the ideas expressed therein. He should report *verbatim* what he learnt from his teachers, and not narrate in his own words the sense of what he had learnt. He must possess a retentive memory and should remember his book well, if he reported from it. He should be free from making a report

(1) TR, p. 9.



on the authority of those whom he met, what he did not learn from them. His report must be in agreement with what has been reported by those who are recognized to have good memory, if they also have transmitted these reports.<sup>1</sup>

All the authorities on the subject (the traditionists as well as the jurists) are unanimously of the opinion that a transmitter of a tradition, in order to be acceptable, must be of firm faith, mature age and proved integrity, and have good memory. He must be well-versed in the method of learning, preserving and transmitting the traditions. He must be thoroughly conversant with the names, careers and characters of the earlier reporters of traditions, as well as with the various classes of them and their defects and special characteristics.

The writers on the subject have divided the traditions, into three classes, according to the degree of their reliability on account of the perfection or imperfection of the chain of their transmitters, the freedom of their texts from hidden defects, and their acceptance or rejection by the Companions, the Followers and their Successors.

These three classes are : (i) the *Ṣaḥīḥ*<sup>2</sup> or Genuine; (ii) the *Ḥasan* or the Fair; and (iii) the *Da'if* or the Weak. The Weak traditions have been sub-divided according to the degree of defects in their reporters or in the texts of the reports themselves. These sub-divisions fall into several categories, e.g. the *mu'allaq* (the suspended), the *maqtū'* (interrupted), the *munqaṭi'* (broken), the *mursal* (incomplete), the *Muṣaḥḥaf* (a tradition having a mistake in Isnād or in the text), the *Shādh* (a tradition with a reliable Isnād but contrary to another similarly attested tradition), the *Maudū'* (the forged) etc. These and other techniques of *Ḥadīth* have been fully explained and discussed in the works on '*Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*'. But the authorities on the subject differ from one another in their interpretation

(1) RSh, 99.

(2) According to the traditionists, the term *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* does not mean that the tradition is actually true and genuine, but that it fulfils the conditions laid down by them for a reliable tradition.



of some of these technical terms. Some of these different interpretations have been explained by al-Sakhāwī and al-Suyūṭī in their works which have been already mentioned.

The writers on '*Ulūm al-Hadīth*' have also described the methods of learning, preserving, teaching and writing down the traditions in book form. They have also described the methods of collating the manuscripts with their original copies as well as other matters connected with the subject.

2. '*Ilm al-Jarḥ w'al-Ta'dīl* (the science of criticism of the reporters of *Hadīth*). This science forms a very important part of *Asmā' al-Rijāl* which has been already dealt with, in some detail.<sup>1</sup> A short but complete description of its origin and development has been given by al-Jazā'irī.<sup>2</sup>

The traditionists as well as the jurists, however, have also divided the traditions according to the number of their transmitters during the first three generations of the Muslims, into: (i) the *Mutawātir*; (ii) the *Mashhūr*; and (iii) the *Āḥād*.

The *Mutawātir* are the traditions which have been transmitted throughout the first three generations of the Muslims by such a large number of transmitters as cannot be reasonably expected to agree on a falsehood. There is a difference of opinion about the number of the transmitters necessary for it during each of the first three generations of the Muslims. Some authorities fix it at seven, some at forty, some at seventy,<sup>3</sup> and some at a much higher number.<sup>4</sup> Very few of the traditions received by us belong to the category of the *Mutawātir*. They have been collected together by al-Suyūṭī in his *al-Azhār al-Mutanāthirah fī al-Akhbār al-Mutawātirah*.<sup>5</sup>

The *Mashhūr* are the traditions which being transmitted originally in the first generation by two, three or four

(1) See *supra*, pp. 189ff.

(2) TN, 113-118.

(3) NA, 176.

(4) TR, 190.

(5) *Ibid*, 191.



transmitters, were later on transmitted on their authority, by a large number of transmitters in the next two generations. Such traditions are also called the *Mustafīd*. To this class belong a large number of traditions which are included in all the collections of *Aḥādīth* and constitute the main foundations of the Islamic law.

The *Āḥād* are the traditions which were transmitted during the first three generations of the Muslims by one to four transmitters only.

The traditions have been also subdivided into two classes: (i) those that have been narrated by all their transmitters *verbatim*, the expressions used by all of them being identical, and (ii) those traditions the contents of which have been reported by their transmitters in their own words.

#### THE LEGAL IMPORTANCE OF TRADITIONS

The legal importance of all these three classes of traditions has been discussed in the works on Islamic Jurisprudence. The first two classes are recognized by all the important Sunni jurists as the second important source of Islamic law since the life-time of the Prophet. The last of them, i.e. the *Āḥād*, has been accepted as superior to *Qiyās* (Analogy) by all the important Sunni schools of Islamic law except that of Imām Mālik, who gives superiority to *Qiyās* in face of the *Āḥād* traditions.

As a matter of fact, the acceptance of *Hadīth* as a source of Islamic law has been advocated in the Qur'ān which says: "Whatever the Apostle gives to you, take it; and whatever he forbids, abstain from it".<sup>1</sup> The Prophet also very often emphasised the importance of his *Hadīth* for his followers.<sup>2</sup> He as well as his immediate successors took the knowledge of *Hadīth* into consideration while appointing the state officials. According to Dārimī, whenever any legal case came to Abū

(1) Qur'ān, LIX, 7.

(2) SD, 26.



Bakr, he looked into the Qur'ān and decided the case according to it, if he found it there. But if he did not find it in the Qur'ān, he referred to the practice of the Prophet and decided the case accordingly. If he failed to find it there also, he inquired from the other Companions about it; and if they informed him of any decision of the Prophet in the matter, he thanked God and decided the case accordingly. But if the Companions failed to cite any decision of the Prophet, Abū Bakr collected the leaders of the people, and sought their advice; and after they arrived at an agreed decision, he ordered according to it.<sup>1</sup>

The same was the practice of 'Umar also. Whenever any question of law came to him for decision and he failed to find any authority for it in the Qur'ān, he inquired from his fellow Companions whether they knew any *Hadīth* on the subject. If they reported any relevant tradition and also produced sufficient evidence in their support, he accepted the tradition and gave his judgment according to it. He asked an assembly of the Companions (when the problem of the delivery of a dead child by a woman on account of being attacked by another woman arose) to relate to him any *Hadīth* on the subject, which they might know. Mughīra related a *Hadīth* on the subject. 'Umar asked him to bring a witness to support him in his narration. Muḥammad b. Maslama supported Mughīra. 'Umar then accepted the *Hadīth* and decided the case accordingly.<sup>2</sup> Many similar cases are mentioned in the *Hadīth* works e.g. the fixation of the number of *takbīr* in the *Jināza*-prayer, the imposition of the poll-tax on the Zoroastrians,<sup>3</sup> the use of *tayammum* in the case of night-pollution.<sup>4</sup> In all these cases, *Aḥādīth* were sought out and laws were laid down according to them.

(1) SD, 32-33.

(2) SB, ii, 124.

(3) *Ibid*, 137; RSh, 114.

(4) SAD, i, 52.



There were also cases which were decided by the Companions according to their own opinion<sup>1</sup> (*Rā'iy*) on account of the want of knowledge of any *Hadīth* on the subject. But they changed their decisions as soon as they came to know of it. There are reported cases in which the Companions like Abū al-Dardā' and Abū Sa'id al-Khudrī migrated away from a place because some of the people living there preferred their own personal opinions to the traditions which were related to them.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, there were cases in which 'Umar and some other Companions on being told of a *Hadīth* on any subject, did not follow it and gave their judgment against its obvious sense and according to their own opinion. During the caliphate of 'Umar, there arose the important problem of the right to the fifth part of the booty for the relatives of the Prophet. The Prophet's practice was in its favour. It was discussed for several days in an assembly of the Companions, and after a long discussion 'Umar decided against the practice of the Prophet and what was considered to be the command of the Qur'ān.<sup>3</sup> For he held that the verses of the Qur'ān and the basic Islamic principle did not justify the continuance of the practice of the Prophet after his death.<sup>4</sup> There are mentioned several other cases of this type in *Hadīth* works. But a close scrutiny of all these cases shows that the *Hadīth* of the Prophet was not rejected altogether. It was either differently interpreted, or the memory and the understanding of the reporters were questioned.

The Muslim doctors, however, have discussed the basic problem of the nature and character of the words and deeds of the Prophet. Many of them are of the opinion that every word and action of the Prophet is of religious character and

(1) On *Rā'iy* and *Qiyās* see SB, book "*I'tisām*", ch. *dhamm al-rā'iy et al*, and 'Asqalānī's commentary on the same.

(2) RSh, 118-120.

(3) See 'Asqalānī's commentary on SB, book *Fard al-khumus*, ch. *Qismat al-Imām*, and various other places.

(4) *al-Fārūq*, ii, 198-201.



must be literally followed by every Muslim. Others differentiate between what he said or did as a Prophet and what he said and did as an ordinary man. Some of the Muslim doctors are of the opinion that what he said or did as an ordinary man has no religious character and, therefore, need not be followed by all the Muslims. For the Prophet himself said: "I am a human being. When I command you to do any thing concerning your religion, then accept it; and when I recommend to you to do any thing on account of my personal opinion, then you should know that I am also a human being".<sup>1</sup> This means that the latter recommendation may or may not be accepted. These personal actions and likes and dislikes of the Prophet also are of two classes: (i) those which are restricted to him only on account of his being in a privileged position as a prophet; (ii) and those which may be followed by other Muslims also.

All the orthodox Muslim jurists, however, are unanimously of the opinion that every tradition of the Prophet which is proved to be reliable according to the canons laid down by them and is of religious character, is of great legal importance, second only to that of the Qur'ān. In this there is no difference of opinion between the traditionists and those who are known as *Aṣḥāb al-Rā'iy* (the people of opinion). All the important Muslim Jurists belonging to the first three generations of the Muslims preferred the traditions to *Qiyās*. As a matter of fact, many of them refused to express their own opinion on legal matters in cases in which no tradition was known to them.<sup>2</sup> The practices followed by the Companions were also accepted as legal authority by the Muslims of the next two generations, because they reasonably presumed that they must have been based on the traditions and the practices of the Prophet which were followed by the Companions scrupulously after due consideration. This was the basis of the principle followed by Imām Mālik in accepting the practices of the Companions as an important legal authority.

(1) SM, ii, 264; HB, i, 249-50. (Indian ed., Lahore, 1351 A.H.)

(2) SD, 26ff.; RSh, 117-19; JBI, ii, 31-33.



But the important Muslim jurists differed among themselves about the legal significance of those traditions about the reliability of which they were not certain. To this class of traditions belong the *Āḥād* category of them. Imām Abū Ḥanīfa and Imām Mālik did not consider all the traditions belonging to this category as superior to *Qiyās*. Imām Mālik preferred *Qiyās* to all *Āḥād* traditions which were not backed by the practices of the Companions and the Followers. Imām Abū Ḥanīfa accepted some of them and rejected others, as was the practice of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb<sup>1</sup>. He accepted them in connection with ordinary matters, if he was satisfied about the legal acumen and instinct of the reporter. But in cases of intricate legal problems, he rejected them unless they were supported by circumstantial evidence and basic Islamic principles.

But Imām al-Shāfi'ī preferred the *Āḥād* traditions to *Qiyās* in all cases. He has tried to prove it in all his works by quoting a large number of cases in which the reports of single individuals were accepted by the Prophet himself and, after him, by many of the Companions also.

It may thus be seen that the difference of opinion between the various orthodox Sunni schools of Muslim law is not with regard to the acceptance of *Hadīth* in general (as an important source of Islamic law), but about a particular class of it. It has been already shown that the first three generations of the Muslims treated those *Āḥādīth* and *sunan* of the Prophet, which, they considered to be reliable and of religious importance, to be the second important source of Islamic laws. It is, therefore, unwarranted to assert that the *Āḥādīth* were not considered as an important source of Islamic law during the classical period (as a modern European orientalist has tried to prove.<sup>2</sup>)

(1) *al-Fārūq* (Lucknow, 1898) by Shibli Nu'mānī, ii, 196.

(2) Prof. Joseph Schacht in OMJ.



THE PRINCIPLES OF CRITICISM OF *Hadith*

The traditionists and the jurists have developed some sound principles for the criticism of *Hadith*. These principles are described in the works on *Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth* and Jurisprudence, and some of them may also be gathered from the works on the *Mawḍū'āt* and the *Asmā' al-Rijāl*.

As every *Hadith* consists of two parts—(i) the *Isnād* (the chain of narrators) and (ii) the *Matn* (the text)—the principles of the criticism of *Hadith* may also be classified into two categories (i) those relating to the *Isnād*, and (ii) those relating to the text.

(i) The criticism of the *Isnād*, its origin and earliest application to *Hadith*, and its development, and the origin and development of biographical literature in connection with it, and other connected matters (including the necessary qualifications of the narrators) have been already discussed in detail. The principles of its criticism, which are based on them, may be summarized as follows :—

(a) Every *Hadith* must be traced back to its original reporter through a continuous chain of transmitters, whose identity, unquestionable character and high qualities of head and heart must have been established.

(b) Every *Hadith* reporting an event which took place every now and then in the presence of a large number of people, must have been originally reported by several narrators.

It is on account of these principles that a large number of traditions, which do not follow them, have been rejected by all the important traditionists, and are included in the works on the *Mawḍū'āt*. An example of this class is the *Hadith* reported by Abū Hurayra alone that the Prophet used to recite *Bismillah* loudly in all his prayers.<sup>1</sup> Another example is the *Hadith* (said to have been reported by Abū Bakr alone) which says that at the time of the Call for the prayers, the

(1) NA, 185f.



Muslims kissed their thumbs when the Prophet's name was recited. Each of these traditions is rejected by the traditionists because it is reported by a single Companion, whereas the events reported took place several times every day in the presence of a large number of Muslims.

(ii) The genuineness of the Isnāds, however, is no proof of the actual genuineness of the text of the traditions to which they are attached.<sup>1</sup> According to the traditionists, even if the Isnād is faultless, the text may be a forgery. Ibn al-Jauzī has appreciated and quoted the remark: 'If you find a *Hadīth* contrary to reason, or to what has been established to be correctly reported, or against the accepted principles, then you should know that it is forged'.<sup>2</sup> Abū Bakr b. al-Ṭayyib is reported to have remarked that it is a proof of the forged character of a tradition that it be against reason and common experience; or that it be contrary to the explicit text of the Qur'ān or the Mutawātir traditions or the Consensus (*Ijmā'*); or that it contains the report of an important event taking place in the presence of a large number of people, whereas it be reported by a single individual; or that it lays down severe punishment for minor faults, or promises high rewards for insignificant good deeds.<sup>3</sup> al-Ḥākim has given several examples of forged and weak traditions having sound Isnāds.<sup>4</sup> al-Suyūṭī has remarked that very often, there are found weak or forged traditions with sound Isnāds; and he has given several examples of them.<sup>5</sup> As a matter of fact, the only sure guidance to the determination of the genuineness of a tradition is (as remarked by Ibn al-Mahdī and Abū Zar'a) a faculty that is developed by a traditionist through long, continuous study of the traditions, and as a result of constant discussions about them with other traditionists.<sup>6</sup>

(1) As has been pointed out by Robson. See pp. 25-26 in his article on *Isnād* (*op. cit.*)

(2) TR, 100.

(3) TR, 99.

(4) UH, 58 ff. These traditions have been quoted by Robson (*op. cit.*)

(5) TR, 48.

(6) *Ibid.*, 39.



On the basis of the above-mentioned and other similar remarks by important traditionists, the following general principles for the criticism of the texts of the traditions may be laid down :—

(a) A tradition must not be contrary to the other traditions which have been already accepted by the authorities on the subject as authentic and reliable. Nor should it be contrary to the text of the Qur'ān or the accepted basic principles of Islam ;

(b) a tradition should not be against the dictates of reason and natural laws and common experience ;

(c) the traditions containing disproportionately high rewards for insignificant good deeds or disproportionately severe punishments for ordinary sins must be rejected ;

(d) the traditions containing the excellent virtues of the various chapters of the Qur'ān should not be generally accepted as reliable ;

(e) the traditions containing the excellence and praises of persons, tribes and particular places should be generally rejected ;

(f) the traditions which contain detailed prophecies of the future events with dates must be rejected ;

(g) and the traditions containing such remarks of the Prophet as may not be in keeping with his prophetic position, or such expressions as may not be suitable to him, should be rejected.

It is on account of these principles that a large number of traditions which are included in such collections of them as are commonly thought to be reliable, have been rejected by the compilers of the standard *Hadīth*-collections ; and they are included in the collections of forged traditions (like those of Ibn al-Jauzī,<sup>1</sup> Mullā, 'Alī al-Qārī,<sup>2</sup> al-Shaukānī<sup>3</sup> and others).

(1) *Kitāb al-Mawdu'āt*.

(2) *al-La'ālī al-Maḡnū'ah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Mawdu'ah*.

(3) FMj.



Among them al-Shaukānī has collected together in his book the results of the researches of the previous writers on the subject. He has also given the names of the *Hadīth* works in which the forged traditions are to be found. Moreover, in many cases, he has fixed up the narrators who forged these traditions.

In the standard collections of the traditions also (in spite of the great care of their compilers), there are still found some weak or forged traditions, which have been discussed and criticised by their commentators and some other authorities on traditions. The following are some examples of them :—

(a) The *Hadīth*, reported by al-Bukhārī, that Adam's height was sixty yards, has been criticised by Ibn Hajar on the basis of the measurement of the homesteads of some of the ancient nations which do not show that their inhabitants were of an enormous height.<sup>1</sup>

(b) The *Hadīth* reported by al-Bukhārī, that the verse of the Qur'ān (XLIX, 9) : 'And if two parties of believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them,' refers to the quarrel between the party of 'Abd Allāh b. Ubayy and that of the Companions of the Prophet, has been criticised by Ibn Baṭṭāl, who has pointed out that the verse refers to a quarrel between two parties of the Muslims, whereas 'Abd Allāh b. Ubayy had not accepted Islam even outwardly at the time when the verse was revealed.<sup>2</sup>

(c) The *Hadīth*, that if Ibrāhīm, (the son of the Prophet) had lived, he would have been a prophet, has been severely criticised by al-Nawāwī, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr and Ibn al-Athīr; and al-Shaukānī has included it among the forged traditions.<sup>3</sup>

(1) SB, *Kitāb al-Anbiyā, bāb khalq Adam*; FB (Egypt, 1320 A.H.), vi, 230.

(2) SB, *Kitāb al-Ṣulḥ*, ch. I; also see FB *ad. loc.*

(3) See "Ibrāhīm" (the son of the Prophet) in IMA and UGH. Also see FMj, 144. For another version of this *Hadīth*, see SB, ii, 434 (Krehl's ed., cited in IT, 63).



(d) The *Aḥādīth* reported by Ibn Māja on the excellence of Qazwīn (his own hometown) have been declared by the traditionists as forged ones.

(e) The *Hadīth* reported by some traditionists, that 'he who loved, kept clean and died, is a martyr' has been declared by Ibn al-Qayyim as forged and baseless. He says that even if the Isnād of this *Hadīth* were as bright as the sun, it would not cease to be wrong and fictitious.<sup>1</sup>

(f) The *Hadīth* reported by al-Bukhārī that Abraham will pray to God on the Day of Judgment (saying : "O Lord Thou hast promised that Thou wouldst not humiliate me on the Day of Judgment") has been criticised and rejected by al-Isma'īlī (cited by Ibn Ḥajar).<sup>2</sup>

(g) Most of the traditions concerning the coming of al-Dajjāl and of the Mahdī, and those concerning Khaḍīr, are declared by the traditionists as forged ones, and are included in the works on the *Mawḍū'āt*.

Many other similar instances of the criticism of the text of traditions included in their collections by even standard, authoritative compilers may be gathered from the commentaries on those compilations and the works on the *Asmā al-Rijāl* and the *Mawḍū'āt*. It is thus clear that the Muslim doctors criticised not only the Isnād of each tradition but also its text, and did not fail to point out its defect, weakness and its unreliability or its forged character (determined in accordance with the principles which have been mentioned above).

At the end, I may add that there is enough material available for the compilation of a standard collection of completely authentic traditions out of the already generally accepted compilations of them, after examining each tradition contained in them, according to the principles already laid down by the

(1) ZM, 97.

(2) FB, viii, 354.



Muslim traditionists, as well as according to those which may be prescribed by the modern literary critics. It is, of course, a tremendous task ; but, certainly, it can be achieved with the combined efforts of such Muslim scholars and modern Orientalists as may be interested in the subject.

#### THE END



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